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Introduction to The Philosophy of Being

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Preface

This is an introductory textbook of metaphysics, an experimental version of which has been in use for several years. Its aim is to help a beginning student; it is not a profound study directed to the scholar. The reason for writing a new textbook, Thomistic in inspiration, is twofold; there is question both of manner of presentation and of doctrine.

With many others I believe that metaphysics is *not* an analysis of concepts. As an example of a purely conceptual analysis, I would like to point out the procedure of those who take a concept of being, compare it with a concept of nonbeing, and derive the principle of contradiction. From this they deduce the principle of sufficient reason. Then, by applying the principle of sufficient reason to change, they deduce the principle of causality. In this procedure, before we have ever experienced a cause, we know that a cause is necessary for change. This entire procedure of analysis and deduction seems to me to be hypothetico-deductive (a priori), and far from St. Thomas's method. "Aristotle," says St. Thomas,[®] "proceeded along another way. For first he showed in many ways that there is something stable in sensible things."

According to St. Thomas, the human intellect must begin with sensible things, and hence all principles must somehow be found in sense experience. The discovery of principles is an induction, as I hope to prove in this text. But there is no danger of empiricism or sensism, if we remember that point on which Aristotle and St. Thomas were ready to stake their whole philosophy, namely, that sensible things are potentially *intelligible*. If this

• *On Spiritual Creatures*, art. 10, ad 8, trans. Mary C. Fitzpatrick and John J. Wellmuth (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 1949), p. 122.

means anything, it means that sensible things can be understood as being. How we can build a metaphysics upon our experience of sensible things may be difficult to explain, but according to St. Thomas we must find in the being of our direct experience all the intrinsic principles of being. Being is simply the first principle; there are other principles which we find in concrete being through the intelligible light of being. These principles are connected with being, but they cannot be deduced from it by any purely conceptual process.

The decision to base metaphysics on sensible being as it is presented to us in immediate experience entailed other departures from systematized Thomism. Act and potency could no longer be presented according to their "concepts," but had to grow out of the consideration of substance and accident, matter and form, essence and the act of existence. Similarly, analogy turned out not to be a simple scheme of predication but a complex group of relations. Naturally, in an introductory textbook, the historical and textual evidence that confirms the experiential evidence cannot be presented; the reader—student or teacher—is referred to the last chapter and to the studies there cited.

With regard to the manner of presentation, this book is not "St. Thomas made simple." St. Thomas's thought is not simple, and attempted simplifications usually end by simplifying the positions and letting the reasoning go. The method of this book attempts to provide for the necessary introductory character of the course by selecting only a few of the problems of metaphysics for study and by giving as concrete a presentation of the evidence as possible.

As far as course work is concerned, these suggestions can be made. In the preliminary presentation, the first three chapters should be covered rapidly and then taken thoroughly at the end of the course by way of review. The course could also be begun with Chapter IV, without any serious difficulties. It would even be possible to begin with Chapter IX, but this procedure would entail quite a few difficulties in teaching. It is also suggested that

Chapters XI to XIII inclusive be studied very briefly, and that, if the time is short, preference be given to a review of the first ten chapters. Chapter XIV is not intended to be taken as such in a regular class; pertinent parts can be taken up in connection with earlier parts as indicated by the cross references to the last chapter, and better students can be directed to study parts of it privately. The footnotes are in general of two types: cross references and clarifications. The cross references will help the student to become aware of the connections between the various topics. The explanatory footnotes will sometimes be helpful for classwork, but in the main they are not intended to be given full attention by all the students the first time through the book. Better students can find in them suggestions for further study and comparison with what they have learned. In review classes, the footnote material will often be useful, but the individual teacher will be able to judge the capabilities and interests of particular classes.

Some passages from St. Thomas are included in the text. It is presumed that the student will have ready access to the English translations of St. Thomas and that readings be assigned from the passages indicated in the readings at the end of the chapters. Perhaps the review sessions are also the best time to study the passages from St. Thomas more thoroughly.

A word to the student may be in order here. Philosophy is a distinct kind of knowledge, different from history, science, languages, mathematics, and so on. Hence, it must be studied in a special way. Particularly in the philosophy of being, the great need is for understanding. There are few new facts to be learned, but explanations must be grasped. Definitions and proofs need to be memorized; at best they are but tools. Knowing the answer the teacher wants is by no means the same as knowing philosophy. Real knowledge of philosophy is an intellectual understanding, an insight. It is something like a contemplation, a long, hard look at reality and its intelligible manifestations. There are no mechanical rules or formulas that can substitute for under-

standing. Time, thinking, reading, discussion—these will generate the habit of metaphysics. To many students, philosophy will seem at first a strange pursuit. But if it is faithfully worked at, it can be one of the truly rewarding experiences of education.

If the author were to mention by name all who have helped him in the learning of metaphysics or the writing of this book, he would have to mention some who would not agree with the final form this book has taken. Prominent among those who have given suggestions and constructive criticism have been the teachers in the 14 schools where the preliminary edition was used. As a result of the very thorough classroom testing and of extensive discussion and correspondence with valued friends, this present edition is almost in its entirety a new book. The mature reflections of one's teachers, one's colleagues, and even one's students influence the writing of any philosophical work. Yet in spite of this social or group aspect which philosophy has in common with the sciences, there is a highly personal character to all philosophical thinking, so that in the last analysis no one except the author of a philosophical work is responsible for its inadequacies.

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Table of Contents

PREFACE	
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v

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The philosophy of being and other kinds of knowl- edge	1
2. The philosophy of being and the other parts of philosophy	8
3. Philosophy and religion.....	10
4. Characteristics of organized, scientific knowledge .	14
5. Thomistic philosophy	15
6. Definitions	17
7. Readings	19

II. THE MEANING OF "BEING"

8. Various senses of the word <i>real</i>	24
9. The question: "What is it to be real?" - - -	25
10. The Thomistic answer to the question: "What is it to be real?" " "	34
11. Demonstrative knowledge and abstraction - - -	36
12. Our knowledge of being as being	39
13. The first principles of knowledge.....	44
14. Definitions	46
15. Summary of the argument.....	47
16. Readings	48

III. THE FIRST ANALOGY OF BEING

17. The fact of knowledge in common.....	53
18. Univocation and its basis	53
19. Is being a universal ?.....	54
20. Being is analogous.....	56
21. Definitions	61

22. Summary.....	61
23. Readings.....	62
IV. BECOMING—CHANGE—MOTION	
24. The implications of change	64
25. Identity, distinction, and difference - - - -	66
26. A changing thing has really distinct components .	68
27. Definitions	72
28. Summary.....	73
29. Readings.....	73
V. THE INTRINSIC PRINCIPLES OF CHANGE AND BEING: I. IN PARTICULAR	
30. Accidental change and the substance-accident composition of being	76
31. Substance and accident as beings by analogy . .	78
32. Substantial change and the matter-form composition of substance	80
33. Individuals in a species and matter-form composition	83
34. That-which-is and the act of existing (<i>esse</i>) .	88
35. The distinction between power and activity . .	91
36. Definitions	93
37. Summary of the argumentation	95
38. Readings.....	96
VI. THE INTRINSIC PRINCIPLES OF BEING: II. AS ANALOGOUSLY ONE	
39. Comparison of the three sets of intrinsic principles	101
40. Theorems of act and potency	104
41. Concluding remarks about act and potency . .	112
42. Exercise	116
43. Readings.....	117
VII. THE EXTRINSIC PRINCIPLES OF BEING: I. THE AGENT	
44. Principles of change	119
45. Causal factors	121

46. The causality of the agent or efficient cause . . .	121
47. Types of agents: univocal and equivocal causes . .	126
48. Types of agents: principal and instrumental causes	128
49. The exemplar cause.....	130
50. The theorem of causality.....	130
51. The analogy of eminence in causality - - - -	135
52. Definitions.....	137
53. Proofs.....	140
54. Readings.....	140

VIII. THE EXTRINSIC PRINCIPLES OF BEING: II. THE GOAL OF ACTION

55. The goal of action.....	144
56. Finality in being	153
57. Chance	154
58. Definitions.....	157
59. Proof.....	158
60. Readings.....	158

IX. GOD, THE CAUSE OF LIMITED BEING

61. The problem	160
62. Solutions.....	161
63. The question of knowledge	163
64. The question of proof	165
65. Evidence and argumentation (I)	168
66. Evidence and argumentation (II)	169
67. The analogy of participation	170
68. Answers to objections	174
69. The creative intellect and the finality of natural causes	176
70. Definitions.....	179
71. Readings.....	180

X. THE TRANSCENDENTAL^

72. Being is a transcendental	186
73. Possibles.....	188
74. Beings of reason and pure intelligibilities . . .	190
75. The transcendental "one" > >	193

76. The transcendental "true"	195
77. The transcendental "good"	199
78. The transcendental "beautiful"	203
79. Definitions.....	204
80. Proofs	205
81. Readings.....	205
XI. THE PREDICAMENTS: SUBSTANCE AND SUPPOSIT	
82. The predicaments in general	212
83. Substance	218
84. Supposit and person.....	220
85. Digression on the backgrounds of the problem of personality	222
86. Definitions.....	222
87. Readings.....	223
XII. ACCIDENTS IN GENERAL: QUANTITY AND QUALITY	
88. The nature of accidents.....	229
89. Quantity and quality	234
90. Digression: the substance-accident distinction and the theology of the Eucharist.....	236
91. Definitions.....	236
92. Readings.....	236
XIII. THE FORMALIZED ACCIDENTS	
93. Relation	239
94. Action and passion.....	247
95. When, where, situs, and habitus	250
96. Definitions.....	252
97. Proof	253
98. Readings.....	253
XIV. CORRELATIONS	
99. Introductory note	257
100. Ontological and eonstructural knowledge . . .	257
101. Metaphysics, experience, and spontaneous knowl- edge	264

TABLE OF CONTENTS

xíü

102. Digression on “common sense”	269
103. Metaphysics and humanistic knowledge (liberal education).....	273
104. Metaphysics and other scientific knowledges . . .	276
105. Metaphysics and the faith	278
106. Thomism and other philosophies	281
107. The constructural knowledge of being - - - -	282
108. The analogy of <i>analogy</i>	286
109. St. Thomas and the Thomists.....	290

INDEX OF PASSAGES FROM ST. THOMAS AQUINAS.....	293
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INDEX OF NAMES AND SUBJECTS.....	295
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1. The philosophy of being and other kinds of knowledge

A college student has already learned many things and may often feel that what he knows is more than enough to last a lifetime. A student may be fully aware of the necessity of continuing his studies in the field he has chosen for his special work; but why take up another subject which, at first sight, will have no practical value? Before this question can be answered, it is necessary to consider the relationships among the various kinds of knowledge and of these various kinds of knowledge to a human being.¹

First of all, we can have different modes of knowledge about a particular subject (for example, life, number, man). The first mode of knowledge is that of unreflective, untutored, day-to-day, spontaneous knowledge. For examples we can consider our direct acquaintance with the objects of daily experience—food, weather, clothes, other people, animals, machines. This kind of knowledge is similar to those immediate, simple judgments in the practical order which are often called “common sense.”² We are here going to consider the theoretical knowledge that we derive from common experience. In our day-to-day dealing with concrete reality, we have an incontrovertible evidence for the existence of a distinct world of extra-mental reality. We see that this world is made up of tilings which are also distinct from

¹The three modes of knowledge are considered more fully in Chap. XIV, secs. 101 and 103.

²The term “common sense” is discussed in detail in sec. 102.

each other; that these things belong to different kinds or classes; that they undergo change; and that there are different kinds of change. These truths are more or less the immediate results of perceptual experience. Moreover, immediate experience delivers to us a massive, constantly repeated and reinforced evidence for some general propositions (for example, that changes are brought about by causes), and some few conclusions (for example, that the world is dependent upon, and under the control of, some greater being). Of these things and truths even the untaught and unreflective man is certain.

Spontaneous knowledge, however, has very definite limitations. The certain truths that it contains are isolated from each other; spontaneous knowledge is not organized through principles. The reflections of an undisciplined mind tend to be rambling, disconnected, and repetitive. Spontaneous knowledge very often cannot tell why it has the truth; its reasoning is often implicit. Spontaneous knowledge is unable to defend its truths against objections and attacks, and can easily be weakened and even overthrown by passion. Hence, even when spontaneous knowledge is true, this truth is at a subscientific level of development.

The second mode of knowledge is refined. For example, knowledge in the second mode is that which an educated person has of human nature through poetry, history, drama, and so forth; briefly, it can be designated as the product of a liberal education. This refined mode of knowledge has two essential characteristics. One is that it possesses some organization through principles. The other is that it is not merely knowledge; it is addressed to the total human personality, and for this reason it often is called "humanistic knowledge." A liberally educated person has learned intellectually; he has also developed his sensory, emotional, and volitional life. Because humanistic knowledge usually develops out of a contact or interaction with culture, it is more complete than spontaneous knowledge, for it draws on the contributions of a social group. For the same reason, many of the crude errors and misconceptions of spontaneous thinking are eliminated from

refined knowledge. Very many men find this mode of knowledge sufficient for living a full human life and never achieve any other type of knowledge.

Humanistic or refined knowledge, though it is a necessary and irreplaceable part of a full human development, has some limitations as far as knowledge itself is concerned. As knowledge, it does have some organization, but its organizational principles are either understood in the spontaneous mode or in terms of concrete imagery, its structure tends toward tire rhetorical, and its deepest understanding tends toward metaphor or myth. In humanism, man has found one pole of his perfection, and yet there is a direction in which the full rationality of human reason has not yet been reached.

The mind's drive toward the conscious exercise of its power to know has led to the development of a third mode of knowledge, the scientific.³ This mode of knowledge is relatively complete and has freed itself from the subtler as well as the grosser errors of everyday knowledge. Moreover, it is organized by intrinsic principles that are proper to its subject, and therefore it can really demonstrate its conclusions. As a further consequence, it is at least to some extent a certain knowledge.⁴ The most familiar examples of organized knowledge are the natural sciences. In physics, for example, there is first of all a carefully checked and relatively complete body of facts; there is secondly an organization of these facts into systematic units by means of general principles and theories: all the facts about light are unified and put into relation with each other through the systematic theory of light; all the facts about falling bodies and planetary motions are unified through the laws of motion. It is only when

• In this book, the term "science" is used in its modern, restricted sense, as a name for a special kind of demonstrative, "third-mode" knowledge. The adjective, "scientific," however, is used to mean not only "belonging to, pertaining to, a science" hut also "similar to a science." Thus, the entire group of third-mode knowledges can be called "scientific knowledges," because all of them aie similar in having an organized structure, and "science" is best known to most people.

* Selected Passages, No. 3, touches on this point.

knowledge has been developed into the scientific mode that we can clearly distinguish the various kinds of knowledge.

Every knowledge is about something, and most knowledges deal directly with something real. What a knowledge is about is called its subject or "subject matter"; for example, arithmetic deals with numbers, biology with living things, and so on. This is the vaguest and most general way to speak of knowledge, and it is so vague that it is of little practical use. If we want to speak a little more accurately, we can describe a knowledge by naming the various tilings that it deals with: arithmetic deals with the numbers 1, 2, 3, and so on; biology, with many kinds of living things.

If we wish to distinguish demonstrative knowledges, we must examine what they intend to investigate about their subjects, and how this is to be done. These questions ask about the objects⁵ of a demonstrative knowledge. The *material object* designates indeterminate and in its entirety the subject of a knowledge (especially of a demonstrative knowledge) in relation to the propositions that can be made about it. By the adjective "material" we do not imply that there is matter in the make-up of the subject; we mean to indicate that the object is to the knowledge as materials are to an artist or craftsman. For example, we might say that the material object of the natural sciences is "what can be known about the things around us which come into being by natural processes"; the object of the social sciences is "what can be known about men in their relationships to each other, especially as they are formed into groups."

When we look at demonstrative knowledges as they have been developed today, we find that there are distinct knowledges

"The term "object" is used in many different meanings. In modern usage it may mean "tiling," "thing presented to knowledge," "purpose or goal." When it is used in the philosophy of human nature to distinguish powers, it means "that which moves a potency to its act." When it is used in metaphysics and epistemology to distinguish kinds of knowledge, various different meanings are used by different authors. The one used in the present book arises from an attempt to simplify and yet to be sufficiently in harmony with other usages as to help the student to read other works.

about the same subject (for example, biology, psychology, and philosophy of human nature have, at least in part, the same subject, man). And they all intend to find out what can be known about man; they have the same material object. What then is the difference? Their ways of knowing, and the kind of knowledge they obtain, are different; this sort of difference is the object considered explicitly *as it is knowable*. That is why the manner of our knowledge, the principles we use, the kind of argumentation we employ, are included in the notion of formal object. To give a complete and accurate description of a knowledge, we designate its material object as specified by the formal object: this we call the "proper object" of a knowledge.

We can now give a preliminary and descriptive definition of the philosophy of being. Its subject is reality; its material object is what can be known about all real things; its formal object, what can be known about all real things "as real"; and so its proper object is what can be known about the real inasmuch as it is real.⁸ We can see at once that most other organized knowledges deal with, or are concerned with, some particular aspect or part of reality (for example, physics, biology, chemistry). Thus at first sight the philosophy of being seems to differ from all other organized knowledges by its material object, for it deals with all of reality, and they deal with aspects or parts of reality.

But we may well wonder whether there is anything more to the philosophy of being than the sum total of all other knowledges. Is there any room for, and any point to, an alleged organized knowledge about the real as such? Some people (positivists, empiricists) say that there is no such thing at all as the philosophy of being. "It is usually supposed that if you publicly dismiss ontology, it will go away quietly; but this is foolishness."¹ Others hold that there is a kind of collected and digested summary of all the various kinds of particular knowledges and

⁸Selected Passages, No. 1, takes up this point.

¹James K. Feibleman, *Ontology* (Baltimore, The Johns Hopkins Press, 1951), p. 100.

that this digest could be called a philosophy of being. But perhaps the best preliminary way to see that there is a place for a distinct and special kind of knowledge called "the philosophy of being" is to look at the type of question that is asked in it. For example. What is it to be real? Why do we call a thing a being? Is there more than one kind of reality? What is change? Is every being changeable, or is there unchanging permanent reality? Is being simple or complex? Is being limited or unlimited? Is a limited being caused? How many kinds of causes are there? What are truth and goodness? What is an individual? A person? Is there a cause of the various beings which we experience? Is this cause God? What kind of being is God, and what is His relationship to us? Even if we do not understand these questions now, it is easy to see that no other organized knowledge asks or answers them and that no collection or summary of other knowledges touches on them.

For this reason there are persons who admit that there is a kind of knowledge called the philosophy of being but think it is an unnecessary luxury, like poetry or lacework. We may put this position in the form of a concrete question: What does the philosophy of being mean to me? What difference does it make to me whether I bother answering these questions at all or answer them wrongly? Here a distinction must be made. Some kind of knowledge of the real, at the lowest level of our everyday knowledge and as the implicit background of all our other knowledge, is the absolutely indispensable condition of all other knowledge in any mode—this we hope to see more clearly at the end of the course than we do now. But even now we can see that in a sense every man is implicitly a philosopher. For everyone distinguishes between fact and fiction, between dream and reality; everyone deals with reality, takes it quietly or rebels against it. These distinctions and modes of action include and involve philosophical knowledge in the everyday mode. For example, the distinction between fact and fiction is actually made even by uneducated persons, though not ver}' clearly and accurately; and

these same persons implicitly accept the principle of contradiction in all their thinking and doing. Furthermore, we see that many persons know, with everyday or even refined knowledge, that there is a God, but they are unable to prove it in any organized way. Is it not enough to know that there is a God without being able to prove it? Can we not rest satisfied with our everyday and our refined knowledge of the real (supported and enlarged by faith) and let it go at that? It is true that not everybody needs to have philosophical knowledge in an organized way, just as not everybody needs to know higher mathematics. But suppose no one explicitly knew the philosophy of being. The probable result would be the acceptance of a large amount of error and superstition by many people. For everyday and refined knowledges contain a greater or smaller percentage of error, and they are incomplete. They contain no safeguards against error; they do not enable a person to meet difficulties and objections. Hence, a person who is trying to become an educated man or woman and who consequently will meet with erroneous philosophical positions both in his reading and in his later life needs for his own sake to know at least the essentials of philosophy. Intellectual ability, moreover, is a responsibility as well as a gift. The common good requires that some of those who can learn philosophy do so.

There is another extrinsic, personal advantage in the study of philosophy. A person cannot be mature and confident without an organized and unified outlook on life. A person who is highly educated only in certain specialized areas finds that the world for him is broken up piecemeal. How is he to organize and master this multiplicity? If he attempts an organization by means of limited principles—limited principles are all that can be found from a specialized (that is, partial) point of view—something will have to be left out. He can organize and order all his knowledge and all the aspects and parts of the world that confront him only from the point of view of, and by means of the principles discovered in, his study of philosophy.

2. The philosophy of being and the other parts of philosophy

Besides the philosophy of being there are other branches of philosophy. Frequently these divisions are used: logic, which deals with second intentions (beings of reason) that pertain to correct reasoning; cosmology (the general philosophy of nature), which deals with a particular kind of real being—that is, material, corporeal, or changeable essence as such—and considers the nature and activities of this *kind* of thing; the philosophy of human nature, which deals with the real being, man, and explicitly treats of his nature and activities; epistemology, which deals with knowledge itself; ethics, which deals with human action. These various parts of philosophy differ in material object among themselves and also differ from the philosophy of being, which deals with all real beings.

Since each of the other philosophical knowledges, however, does within limits deal with something which is, they must all be governed by metaphysics. The principles and conclusions of the philosophy of being are all-pervading. Not that metaphysics can substitute for other kinds of knowledge, not even for the other parts of philosophy; nor can the truths of any other branch of knowledge be deduced from those of metaphysics. This negative description must suffice for the present; we will again consider the relationship of the philosophy of being to other knowledges at the end of the book.⁸

One particular problem of relationship, however, can be taken up at this point. In order to be a complete knowledge of the real, metaphysics must also deal with the absolutely first principle of all other being, that is, with God. The philosophical study of God is often given a special name, that of “natural theology,” and is usually studied in a distinct course under that name. Is it distinct, though, from the philosophy of being in the

⁸ Selected Passages, No. 2, takes up this point. For a fuller development, see below, sec. 104.

same way that logic, the philosophy of human nature, or ethics is? Natural theology treats of divine things not as the subject of the science but as the principle of the subject (that is, being itself); consequently, it cannot be adequately distinct from the philosophy of being. The philosophy of being, taken in its full sense, deals with whatever is in its entirety and with all the principles of the real. For convenience, however, and especially for the advantage of the beginning student, we divide the philosophy of being into two "integral parts":⁹ the introductory philosophy of being and natural theology, which is the complementary and crowning part of the whole philosophy of being. The following may clarify the relation:

THE WHOLE

The philosophy of being is a distinct philosophical knowledge dealing with the real as real and with the principles and characteristics of the real.

THE PARTS

Natural theology deals with uncaused reality as real and as the first principle of all other reality.

Introductory philosophy of being starts with the real which in fact is caused, and indeed with the caused sensible real. From a study of this kind of being, we derive our knowledge of what the real is, of what its characteristics or properties are, and of its principles as this kind of being. Finally, since this kind of reality precisely as real shows itself to be caused, we can move by way of causality to a knowledge of the uncaused Real as the first principle of the reality of experience, and so to a knowledge of that Reality as real.

• An "integral part" is a quantitative or quasi-quantitative part, which together with the rest of the parts makes up a whole by addition and so cannot be predicated of the whole; an integral part can continue to exist when separated from the whole (though it may change its nature in being separated).

3. Philosophy and religion

Philosophy and religion sometimes seem to concern the same things. For example, religious teachings mention good and evil, God, the immortality of the soul, the obligation to do good and avoid evil. Philosophy also deals with these same points. Does that make religion and philosophy the same thing? ¹⁰

By religion, in general, we mean "the sum total of man's relations to a higher being on whom man depends in some way." These relations include both knowledge and action (and the latter is made up of a moral code and some kind of cult or form of worship). Religion can arise as a result of men's effort to find out the basic truths about themselves and the universe and as a result of their desire to act in accord with what they know. A religion that arises in this way is called a "natural religion." In our Western culture, however, this is not what the term "religion" generally connotes. Ordinarily, religion means "revealed religion," that is, a religion which arises both from man's own efforts and a revelation from God. The content of revelation, as far as knowledge is concerned, may include both objects that man's reason could reach by itself and objects that are entirely beyond the powers of human reason. These latter truths can be known only by *faith* (the free intellectual acceptance of a truth on the authority of another); the former objects can be known either by reason or by faith.

When we ask, "Are religion and philosophy the same thing?" obviously we are asking about the relation between religious knowledge and philosophy. To answer this question, we must distinguish not only between natural and revealed religion but also between material and formal objects. As we saw in section 1, knowledges are defined by their proper objects and distinguished one from another particularly by their formal objects, even when they have the same material objects. Now, all the knowledge-objects of a natural religion are also dealt with by

¹⁰ For a fuller discussion, see below, sec. 105.

philosophy; but philosophy deals with some objects (for example, the nature of knowledge itself) with which a natural religion does not deal. The knowledge-objects of a revealed religion, on the other hand, are partly held in common with philosophy and partly are special to revelation (for example, the Trinity, the Incarnation). Thus there are some common material objects for natural religion, revealed (supernatural) religion, and philosophy.

What about the formal objects of these three knowledges? The knowledge contained in natural religion may be held on the ground of a man's own personal insight (on any one of three levels of knowledge) or on the authority of another and wiser man. The knowledge of natural religion, therefore, does not necessarily involve personal insight; it is merely necessary that it contain truths attainable by human reason. Hence, in the case of a philosopher, his natural religious knowledge and his philosophy would be the same, even though natural religious knowledge is not necessarily a demonstrative knowledge. On the other hand, it is the special characteristic of a revealed religion that its truths be accepted by faith. Now, faith is knowledge resting on the authority of a witness, such that the evidence for the assertion bears directly *not* on the truth of what is known but on the character of the witness as such (that is, on his knowledge and truthfulness). When the revealing witness is God himself, the faith by which we accept His revelation is supernatural faith. But in philosophy the situation is different. All the branches of philosophy (indeed, all organized knowledges except history and theology) rest on evidence that bears directly or indirectly on the truth of what is known. A philosopher as such takes something as true because there is evidence bearing on the truth itself; he does not take something as true *because* someone has said it. On the other hand, the knowledge of revealed religion is taken as true precisely because God has said it. Consequently, philosophy and revealed religion have formally different objects and so are really distinct one from the other.

One consequence of this difference is that a man who has everyday knowledge plus faith can tell an error from the truth. He cannot, however, tell why an error is an error; he cannot answer an objection; he cannot easily apply his knowledge to unforeseen situations or difficult problems. This is just the kind of thing a philosopher as such can do. Hence, it is practically necessary', even from the viewpoint of revealed religion, that some believers become skilled in philosophical thinking. So philosophy indirectly helps faith. Secondly, a believer, because he has an intellect with an innate drive toward understanding, wants to understand the content of his faith as much as possible. The organized effort to understand faith is called theology, and a large part of scientific theology consists in the use of philosophical principles and methods to help in the understanding of faith.

On the other hand, historically speaking, faith has helped philosophy. For example, a man who believes what the Christian revelation has to tell him about the nature of God cannot make the philosophical error of thinking that God is an impersonal force. Theology thus is a "negative norm" for philosophy, inasmuch as a man's faith may warn him of errors he is making in philosophy. It must be noted, however, that faith can tell a man *that* he is making an error; it does not tell him *why* the error was made or *how* to correct it—this is a properly philosophical task. Secondly, there is a positive influence of faith on philosophy. Faith suggests new problems to philosophical reflection (for example, Christian thinkers go as deeply as they do into the nature of personality' because of the problems raised by the Incarnation and the Trinity); and faith often presents truths that serve as hints for the properly *philosophical* solutions of problems (for example, St. Thomas's statement, "*Deus est ipsum esse*" owes much to the revelation of God's name, "I am who am," in Exod. 3:13).

Akin to this is the advantage that a Christian student has in the

very learning of philosophy.¹¹ Through his faith and the Christian traditions, a Christian has accepted as certain and has become familiar with truths like the dependence of the sensible universe on God, the immortality' of his soul, and the existence of God and other spiritual beings. He has a firm grasp of these truths, though he may have only a slight understanding of them. Yet this much at least he does understand, that reality includes much more than is contained in the narrow limits of his own sense experience. Because of his firm acceptance of truths about nonsensible reality' he does not find it hard to raise scientific questions about the nature of the real or to follow a purely intellectual argument whose conclusions go beyond the limitations of immediate sense experience. But what a Christian young man or woman accepts and can understand with a measure of fullness, it may take an unbeliever years of experience and study to grasp. Even with the best will in the world, it is the hard work of years to arrive at a full understanding of being, of the existence of God as a nonmaterial and unlimited being, and so forth. For this reason, Aristotle has said, "Young men have no [intellectual] conviction about [the objects and principles of wisdom], but only use the proper language" (*Ethics*, Bk. VI, 1142a19).

But this by no means implies a formal dependence of philosophy upon revelation and faith. Both the Christian and the unbeliever philosophize in the light of rational evidence; both, though with varying degrees of difficulty, can arrive at an intellectual understanding of being and its principles and can acquire rational convictions about them.

St. Thomas Aquinas has explained the relation between reason and revelation very satisfactorily in the fourth chapter of the first book of the *Contra Gentiles*, and a careful reading of this fourth chapter will be most rewarding.

¹¹ For a fuller development of this point, see G. P. Klubertanz, S.J., "The Teaching of Thomistic Metaphysics," *Gregorianum*, XXXV (1954), 187-193, 202-205; E. Gilson, *Thomas Aquinas and Our Colleagues* (Princeton, Aquinas Foundation, 1953), pp. 13-22.

4. Characteristics of organized, scientific knowledge

Not only is a scientific knowledge unified and organized by having a complete set of similar data, by having a self-coherent or internally consistent set of propositions in which these data are expressed, and especially by having a single set of principles (in some knowledges this is merely an ideal not yet realized) by means of which everything in that field of knowledge is related, but there must be an explicit *showing* of these relationships. A man who has a scientific knowledge not only knows something, but he knows that he knows. In other words, an organized knowledge is in some sense a *certain* knowledge. From this point of view, an organized knowledge contains not only data or facts but also conclusions, which are arrived at by some form of reasoning or demonstration; hence, organized knowledge is properly a *demonstrative* knowledge (*scientia*).

A second characteristic of organized or demonstrative knowledge is that (with the exception of history), no demonstrative knowledge deals with a singular thing as singular. Physics, for example, is not interested in the individual peculiarities of this falling body (for example, that it is a dark-green object falling at 11:03 A.M. in a second-story classroom in Idaho); similar examples can easily be found in the case of biology, chemistry, or mathematics. (An exception might seem to be "individual psychology," but the individual is included in this science, not as *this* individual—for example, John Smith—but in terms of the common characteristic of being *an* individual with an individualized set of values or common variable traits.) In other words, organized, demonstrative knowledge is not of the individual and consequently is not expressed through the use of proper names. Put positively, demonstrative knowledge uses general or common terms. Sometimes, also, an equivalently universal proposition is expressed in the form of an indefinite particular (for example, "A man is a rational animal"). We should not be misled by the

grammatical form of propositions into thinking that some sciences do not use universal or at least common terms. In the next chapter we will examine the implications of universal knowledge more fully.¹²

A third characteristic of every demonstrative knowledge is its use of technical terminology. When a biologist is talking, the word “cell” has a very definite meaning and usage quite different from the meanings used by an electrician and a sociologist. For ordinary usages, dictionary definitions are sufficient; but for the specialized purposes of demonstrative knowledge, it is necessary to have much more precise definitions or sometimes new definitions not quite in harmony with ordinary usage. This situation also occurs in the philosophy of being (for example, even the term “being” needs a much more precise understanding in demonstrative knowledge than is necessary for everyday knowledge), and consequently some definitions will have to be given in accord with the specialized purposes of philosophy. At other times it becomes useful to invent new terms. Thus for example, the followers of Aristotle coined the term “metaphysics” (meaning “beyond material nature”), as a technical term for the demonstrative knowledge of the real as such. We will use the term “metaphysics” as a synonym for the philosophy of being as a whole, as well as for the introductory part.

5. Thomistic philosophy

As we shall see much more fully in later chapters, there are many ways of considering reality. Every grown person has an outlook on life (sometimes called a *Weltanschauung*) that involves an implicit metaphysics. Philosophers explicitly state and develop their philosophical view of reality—and come to differing conclusions. Some of these philosophers are wrong, as we shall also try to see; but most often it is a question of how adequate a philosophy is to express the totality of the real.

¹²See below, secs. 11 and 18.

As beginners in philosophy, we are not yet in a position to judge all the various philosophers. It is foolish not to try to make use of the help we can get from a good philosopher, and it is impossible to start out entirely without any metaphysics—a normal eight-year-old is already developing an outlook on life. But because our knowledge of reality as such is still on the everyday level, it is likely to be mixed with much error. For practical purposes, therefore, in order to get started in philosophy with some hope of developing a reasonably good philosophy of our own, we must take someone's lead. What kind of criterion can we use to pick a guide? (fl) He must know that he is building a metaphysics; if he has only an implicit metaphysics, he will not be of much help to us. For this reason, many thinkers who deal explicitly only with specialized problems (for example, with logic or ethics or theory of knowledge or philosophy of science) will not be practical guides, (b) He must know the various kinds of philosophies that have been constructed and have seen their advantages and shortcomings through their historical development. (c) His philosophy must violate no evidence; it must be in harmony with all the evidence and certitudes that are available. These conditions are excellently fulfilled by St. Thomas Aquinas.¹³ (Note that we are not going to take his philosophy as true *because* he said it. To do this would be to acquire not a philosophy but an opinion.)

This temporary procedure, however, should be replaced at the end of our entire philosophy course by our own personal understanding of the truth and adequacy of our philosophy. In judging the adequacy of a philosophy, we must measure the correctness and adequacy of definitions, principles, and conclusions in relation to the proper object of the demonstrative knowledge within which they function. To some extent we can be doing this even as we go through the course, especially when we have completed a unit.

¹³For a fuller discussion, see below, secs. 106 and 109.

6. Definitions¹⁴

The *material object* of a knowledge determines its dates indeterminately and in its entirety the subject of a knowledge in relation to the propositions that can be made about it. For example, the material object of geometry is the lines, surfaces, solids, and angles (its subject) in relation to what can be said about them.

The *formal object* of a knowledge is the object precisely as knowable, according to its manner of being known and its principles. For example, the formal object of geometry is the construction, measurement, and investigation of the properties and relations, of its material object.

The *proper object* of a knowledge is the material object as specified by the formal object. For example, the proper object of geometry is the construction, measurement, and investigation of the properties and relations of lines, surfaces, solids, and angles in so far as these can be known and expressed in propositions.

Metaphysics is that demonstrative knowledge whose proper object is the real as real.

Demonstrative (or scientific) knowledge is an exactly stated knowledge with a single proper object, organized through self-coherent definitions and, especially, by a single set of principles and shown to be accurate and true by some kind of reasoning process which leads to a certain assent or at least to a well-founded assent. For example, physics, philosophy, geometry, and history are demonstrative knowledges.

Science is a kind of demonstrative knowledge concerned with the observation of facts, the establishment of general laws, and the explanation of these facts by means of general concepts logically constructed and deductively verified. Only the natural sciences are sciences in this strict sense.

“This first set of definitions of terms is simply a vocabulary or glossary, giving the meanings of these terms. These definitions settle no philosophical problems; they only make it possible to talk about such problems. Italicized terms are the ones that will be used most frequently and therefore ought to be memorized.

Philosophy, descriptively speaking, is the collective name for metaphysics, philosophy of nature, epistemology, and ethics taken together.¹⁵ Philosophy is distinguished from other kinds of demonstrative knowledge by its inclusiveness of all that pertains to its subject and by its use of direct insights and ontological concepts.

Thing is a whole or a complete individual (as opposed to something that is merely a part, as for example, a hand; or to a collection, as a heap of stones). For example, a tree, a dog, a man.

Sensible thing is a thing capable of directly affecting our senses and therefore something capable of being immediately perceived in external experience. The three examples given of *thing* are also sensible things.

Material thing is a thing among whose intrinsic properties are (a) that it is capable of being measured and (b) that it is able to undergo gradual change; it is not necessary that we be able to sense it. (This is merely a descriptive definition; an essential definition will be given later.) For example, the air 50 miles above ground, a free electron, all sensible things.

Principle is that from which something else follows. For example, the dawn is the principle of the day; fire is a principle of heat; the structure of a watch is a principle of its movement.

A *principle of being* or reality is that from which or through which something is or comes to be. For example, the principle of a house is its builder and also the bricks and other materials that make it up.

A *principle of knowledge* is some knowledge (usually a judgment or a proposition, but not necessarily so) from which some other knowledge follows, according to some kind of connection between the two. For example, in a syllogism, the premises are the principles of the conclusion.

“To define “philosophy” essentially is a very difficult task. Many so-called definitions really define metaphysics; dictionary definitions are not of much help. The second sentence of the above definition will not be understood by the beginning student. It will be made clear in Chap. XIV.

7. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *The Division and Methods of the Sciences: Questions V and VI of St. Thomas's Commentary on the De Trinitate of Boethius* (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1953), q. 5, art. 4. This text deals with the relation between metaphysics and natural theology.

E. F. Caldin, *Science and Christian Apologetic*, Aquinas Papers, No. 17 (London, Blackfriars, 1951), pp. 1-12, on the method of science. This is a simply written yet accurate presentation by a prominent British layman.

Etienne Gilson, *The Unity of Philosophical Experience* (New York, Scribner's, 1940), pp. 299-320; "Historical Research and the Future of Scholasticism," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXIX (1951), 1-10; *Reason and Revelation in the Middle Ages* (New York, Scribner's, 1939), pp. 67-84. The first of these selections deals with the distinctive nature of philosophy, the second and third with the relation of faith to reason. The author is an historian of philosophy as well as a philosopher.

D. J. B. Hawkins, *Approach to Philosophy* (London, Sands, 1938), pp. 1-22. Father Hawkins is a British philosopher.

Jacques Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. Bernard Wall and Margot Adamson (New York, Scribner's, 1938), Introduction. This section concerns the place of metaphysics among various knowledges. The author is a well-known philosopher.

John Wild, *Realistic Philosophy* (New York, Harper, 1948), Introduction and historical section. This passage deals with the relation of philosophy to other forms of knowledge and shows the origin and development of philosophy. Professor Wild is an American philosopher; he follows Aristotle, though with some relation to St. Thomas Aquinas.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

1. On the Nature of Metaphysics

As the Philosopher [Aristotle] teaches in his *Politics*, when some things are ordered to one, one of them must be the regulating or ruling one and the others the regulated or ruled. This is clear in the union of soul and body, for the soul naturally commands and the body obeys. This is the case also among the powers of the soul, for the irascible and the concupiscible powers are in natural order ruled by reason. Moreover, all the sciences and arts are ordered to one; namely, to the perfection of man, which is his beatitude. For this reason it is necessary that one among these sciences and arts be the director of all the others, and this one rightly lays claim to the name

of wisdom. For it is the prerogative of the wise man to order (that is, regulate, or dispose) others.

Which demonstrative knowledge this may be and with what it is concerned can be judged if one diligently observes how someone is fit to rule. For (as the Philosopher says in the aforementioned book) just as men of remarkably superior understanding are naturally rulers and lords, and men of robust body but wanting in understanding are naturally servants, so the knowledge which is in the highest degree intellectual ought to be regulative of others. And this [knowledge] is the one which is concerned with the most intelligible objects.

Now we can take [the expression] "most intelligible objects" in three ways. First from the order of the [act of] understanding. For the things from which the intellect obtains certitude seem to be the more intelligible. Hence, since the certitude of scientific knowledge is acquired by the intellect through causes, the knowledge of causes seems to be in the greatest degree intellectual.

Second, from the comparison of the intellect to the sense. For since sense [knowledge] is the knowledge of particulars, the intellect would seem to differ from sense by reason of the fact that it comprehends universals. Hence, that demonstrative knowledge is in the highest degree intellectual which deals with the most universal principles. These are being and what follows upon being, such as one and many, potency and act. But such principles should not remain entirely undetermined, since without them there cannot be had a completed knowledge of those principles which are proper to some genus or species. Nor should these principles be dealt with again in some one particular demonstrative knowledge, because, as they are requisite for the understanding of each and every kind of being, they would, with equal reason, be dealt with in any particular knowledge. It remains, therefore, that principles of this sort should be treated in one common demonstrative knowledge, which, since it is in the highest degree intellectual, is regulative of the others.

Third, from the intellect's very knowledge. For since each and every thing has intellective power from this, that it is without matter, it is appropriate that those things be most intelligible which are in the greatest degree separate from matter. For the intelligible and the understanding must be proportionate and of the same genus, since the understanding and the intelligible in act are one. But those things are in the greatest degree separate from matter which not only abstract from designated matter, "such as natural forms taken in the universal, with which natural science deals," but which altogether abstract from sensible matter—and this not only according to their intelligibilities (such as mathematical objects), but also according to their act of existing, such as God and the intelligences. Wherefore the demonstrative knowledge which considers these things appears to

be in the highest degree intellectual and the chief and master of the others.

Now, this threefold consideration ought to be applied to one demonstrative knowledge, not to different ones. For the separated substances that have been mentioned [in the third place] are the universal and first causes of being. It is, moreover, the work of the same knowledge to consider the proper causes of a given genus and the genus itself; thus, natural science considers the principles of natural body. Hence, it is proper that one and the same knowledge have as its function to consider separate substances and being in common, which is the "genus" of which the substances mentioned are the common and universal causes.

From this it is clear that, although this demonstrative knowledge considers the three classes of objects spoken of [common principles, universal causes, separate substances], it does not have any one of them at all for its subject, but only being in common. For that is the subject of a knowledge of which we seek the causes and passions [properties]; but the causes themselves of a given genus are not the subject. For the knowledge of the causes of some genus is the end to which the consideration of a knowledge finally attains. Still, though the subject of this knowledge is being in common, the whole of it is said to be about those things which are separate from matter according to their act of existing and according to their intelligibility. For not only are those things which can never be in matter said to be separate from matter according to their *esse* and their intelligibility (such are God and intellectual substances), but also those things which are able to be without matter, such as being in common. But this could not be, if [the latter] depended on matter for their existence.

According to these three classes of objects which have been mentioned, therefore, from which we weigh the perfection of this demonstrative knowledge, it comes to have three names. It is called divine knowledge, or *theology*, insofar as it considers the above-mentioned substances. It is called *metaphysics*, insofar as it considers being and those things which follow upon it; for these transphysical things are arrived at by the way of analysis, as the more common are arrived at after the less common. It is spoken of as *first philosophy*, insofar as it considers the first causes of things. Thus it is clear what the subject of this demonstrative knowledge is, in what way it is related to other knowledges, and by what name it is named.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, proemium.*

2. *Metaphysics and Other Knowledges*

In all the sciences and arts, whether speculative or operative, it is proper that what is higher and what orders others should consider

[the] more universal intelligibilities, since principles are few in number and very great in power, and those that are simple are extended to the most objects. For example, military science is subject to political science, and cavalry science is subject to military, and so on successively. Political science is subject to the consideration of human good, simply. But military science considers this same good inasmuch as it is determined to matters of war, and so on. Because of this the lower takes its principles from the higher, and this is a kind of *propter quid* [causal] proof. This relation is more indisputably evident in the speculative knowledges, because metaphysics, which orders the other knowledges, considers the intelligibility of being absolutely, while the other sciences consider being according to some determination.

*Commentary on the Second
Book of the Sentences, dis.
3, q. 3, art. 2.*

Habits are specified by their objects according to that intelligibility to which they principally attend. . . . Even though something is common, there is a particular and proper intelligibility of object. Thus, first philosophy is a special demonstrative knowledge, though it considers being inasmuch as it is common to all things, because it considers that special intelligibility of being inasmuch as it does not depend on matter and motion.

*Commentary on the Third
Book of the Sentences, dis. 27,
q. 2, art. 4, qa. 2.*

Metaphysics . . . considers all things inasmuch as they are beings, not coming down to a proper knowledge of morality or nature. For the intelligibility, "being," since it is different in different things, is not sufficient for the specific knowledge of things.

*Commentary on the First
Book of the Sentences, pro-
logue, q. 1, art. 2.*

3. *The Certitude of Metaphysics*

The more a scientific knowledge is prior in nature, the more certain it is. This can be seen in that those sciences whose object can be said to be an addition to that of other sciences are less certain than the sciences which take fewer things into consideration. For example, arithmetic is more certain than geometry, for the objects of geometry have something more than those of arithmetic. This is clear if we look at what each of these sciences takes as its first principle; namely, the unit and the point. For the point adds location to the unit. For

the intelligibility of the unit is constituted by undivided being. This notion, when it is taken as a measure, is the principle of number. But the point adds location to this.

The particular sciences are posterior in nature to the universal sciences, because the subject of the former adds to the subject of the latter. For example, "being as changeable," with which the scientific knowledge of nature deals, adds to "being (without qualification)" which is the subject of metaphysics and adds to "quantified being" which is the subject of mathematics. Therefore that scientific knowledge which is about being and the most universal objects is the most certain. Nor is it to be objected that metaphysics is here said to be about fewer things, though it was said above [earlier in the same section, not quoted here] that it knows all things. For the universal comprehends fewer things in act, but more in potency. And a science is the more certain the fewer actual considerations are necessary for the consideration of its subject. Wherefore, practical sciences are the most uncertain, because they must consider the many circumstances of singular operables.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. I, lect. 2
(ed. Cathala, No. 47).*

CHAPTER II

The Meaning of "Being"

8. Various senses of the word *real*

We have seen that metaphysics can be described briefly as the demonstrative (scientific) knowledge of the real inasmuch as it is real, and that therefore its basic question is, "What is it to be *real*?" Before we can go further into this question, we must distinguish the various senses of the word "real."

In the proper sense of the word, a real being is an actual being, one which is not merely an object of the mind or merely possible, but *is* actually in itself. This preliminary description will be made more exact later on. The best way to clarify the proper meaning of *real is* by contrast: an existing airplane is a real machine, a spaceship is not real (not in 1955 at least); Citation is a real horse, Pegasus is not; Sir Winston Churchill is a real human being, Ichabod Crane is not; angels are real beings, leprechauns are not; an orange is a real being, a perfect sphere is only an object of thought.

Sometimes the word "real" is used in an extended sense, for example, in logic and epistemology, to designate not only what is actually now but also whatever has existed, will exist, or can exist independently of thought. In this extended sense, a dinosaur is a real animal, but a centaur is not; Hamlet is a real character, Pogo is not; the battles of the Greeks and Trojans were real, the quarrels of Jupiter and Juno were not. 'Ibis extended meaning of *real is* used to make a distinction among objects of thought: real

objects are those that actually exist or could exist; unreal objects are those that cannot exist.¹

Henceforward, *real* (and forms derived from it) will be used only in its proper sense; that is, to designate the actual things which are now. Thus, when we speak of "knowledge of the real" we will mean "knowledge of things which are here and now actual," and when we speak of "the real order," we will mean "the order (or totality) of things which are actual here and now." If we want to use the extended sense of the word "real," we will always attach the qualification, "in the wide sense."

9. The question: "What is it to be real?"

Since metaphysics is the demonstrative knowledge of the real inasmuch as it is real, and since we can know and talk about things that are not real, obviously our first question must be, What is it to be real? The question, "What is it to be a real

¹ For example, a man can think about a dog he used to own which died last year; the dog is no longer part of the real world in which he lives today. A man can think of a purely fictional character; again, no actual, properly real being corresponds to his thought. But the one who thinks about these things can recognize that in the case of the dog there *was* an actual real thing to which, if it were now, his thought would conform; he can likewise recognize that in the case of the purely fictional character there *could be* an actual thing to which, if it were actual, his thought would also conform. In both cases, absolutely speaking, there is no actual real thing of which he is thinking; in both cases there is simply no-thing in the real order. Nevertheless, the word "real" has been extended to designate objects of thought such as these in order to mark off a distinction between them and still other objects of thought to which no real thing *can* correspond: for example, the internally inconsistent objects mentioned in the earlier paragraphs of this section (leprechauns, centaurs, Pogo, the world of Greek mythology) or such objects as necessarily involve purely mental objectivity, such as logical genera and species ("the species, man"; "the genus, animal"). A diagram may help to show the relationships of these terms:

	the properly real, the actual
real in the wide sense.....*	as opposed to
as opposed to	the past, the future, the possible
the mere object of thought	

For a further explanation of this, see below, sec. 74.

thing?" is not a question about our knowledge² but about the thing known.

To help ourselves see the meaning of this question and the basic importance of the answer, we will look at some historical answers before we look at reality itself.³ Our purpose is to understand these philosophical positions, not to refute them.⁴

(A) A first answer to the question is: A thing is real because, and inasmuch as, it acts or does something. A philosophy which answers the question of the meaning of reality in this way is called "phenomenalism" (from the Greek word meaning "appearance"). Phenomenalism, or "actualism," does not mean, "Every real thing acts in some way" or "We know that something is real because we find it acting" or "We can tell what kind of thing something is by seeing what sort of actions it performs." These

• Questions about our knowledge of the real are questions like, "How do we know real things?" and, "How can we tell, from looking at our knowledge, whether an object of knowledge is real or not?" These questions cannot be answered or even considered now, for the answers to them depend at least in part on the philosophy of human nature.

⁸ To make these different answers more concrete, we will refer to various historical positions. We are, however, not studying the history of philosophy, and so we are not bound to an adequate exposition of the thought of the great philosophers or to a refutation of their systems as wholes. We are interested only in clarifying the question and seeing what is involved in it.

If a reader should desire further information on some of these basic positions, he can find a full introduction and a guide to further reading in the following books. James Collins, *A History of Modern European Philosophy* (Milwaukee, Bruce, 1954), pp. 109-117 (on Hobbes and materialism); pp. 204-207, 226-228 (on Spinoza and the relation between reason and reality); pp. 267-277, 279-281 (Leibniz and the world of intelligible essence); pp. 707-710 (on Comte and positivism); pp. 408-409, 415, 433-436 (on Hume and phenomenalism); pp. 509-512 (on Kant and the possibility of metaphysics; a highly recommended section). Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2d ed. (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), pp. 83-96 (on Scotism and the particular); pp. 51-73 (On Averroës); pp. 74-82 (on Avicenna, another kind of essentialist).

⁴ It is unfair to attack something which a person does not understand. Moreover, instead of refuting the position, one is likely to miss the point entirely. So the first requisite is to understand both our own position and those of the philosophers who hold different positions. And once we have a thorough understanding both of our own philosophy and of other philosophies in their historical context, it is usually unnecessary to engage in a refutation of them. To some this proposition may seem a paradox; the only answer is a real study of the history of philosophy.

three propositions are perfectly true, but they are not the basic statement of actualism. Actualism holds that action is the reality of the tiling. According to this doctrine, for example, "I" am real, in the sense that there are some thoughts, desires, movements, and so forth, which in some inexplicable way belong together. The sources of this doctrine are an incorrect understanding of substance and accident and a misuse of the ability of our mind to consider an action without considering the agent and thus to consider the action as if it were a thing?

To assess the value of phenomenalism we need only to consider attentively the whole real things which are actual. How does an actual real thing manifest itself to us in our experience; for example, a human person? A human person manifests himself to us as something real which acts; a person can act precisely because he is real. A thing is not real in consequence of its action; rather, it can act because it is real. We will have to investigate the relation between a being and its action later on,^c but for the time being it is sufficiently clear that acting is not the very meaning of being real.

(fi) A second answer to the question, What is it to be real? is the answer given by materialism. For example, what is the difference between an architect's idea of a house and the real house which is the result of the plan? It is that the plan has been "realized" in the material components of lumber, cement, stone, clay, and so forth. According to this explanation, an intelligible plan, order, or structure can be real or not real, and matter is the principle of reality. Materialism takes an explanation which is superficially sufficient for the explanation of artifacts and unjustifiably applies it to the ultimate explanation of reality.

Materialism can take several forms. Many materialists think of principle or source of reality in all things. Others, trying to bring philosophy more into line with what they consider are scientific ultimate reality as a collection of material particles which are the

⁸ See below, secs. 30, 82, 88, 93, 94.

⁸ See below, secs. 30 and 94.

views, think of ultimate reality as a large amount of "free energy" which can be either structured into things or left "free," "un-attached" (for example, in the form of radiation).

Materialism involves a number of consequences which we are not going to take up here, but which it will be useful to point out. It involves (a) the denial of any spiritual reality or person; (b) at least logically, the denial of any essential differences in the activities of things; (c) the explanation of life and consciousness in terms of the nonliving and the nonconscious. The first of these consequences is evident. The second follows from the admission by the materialist that matter is an undifferentiated principle. Differences can therefore be only accidental. Those materialists who hold that consciousness, desire, and so forth, are really different from nonconscious activities do so at the cost of logical consistency. For—and this is the third consequence—if matter is the principle of reality, then real activities are material, and the activities of nonliving things are the constituent elements of all activity'. It is fine rhetoric but poor logic to insist that materialism fully respects the evidence of life and knowledge.

For the moment, we are going to consider only one point: the meaning of *real* as given by materialism, "To be real is to be material or in matter." It is true that the things which we experience are material. Why should we even question the identification of reality with matter? We question it for the simple reason that we have equally immediate experience of our own conscious activity, especially that of intellectual knowledge and of choice. These activities have as much claim to be called real as any activities of the things we find that are distinct from us. If we wish to respect the evidence, we must admit that both the activities of physical things and our own conscious activities are truly real. If we look attentively at our own acts of knowledge, they do not present themselves as sensible. They have no directly discoverable relation as *actions* to any material characteristic. Intellectual understanding has no sensible qualities; it presents itself as simply different from, and not describable in terms of,

mass and motion, chemical action, electromagnetic activity, or in one phrase, any activities of nonhuman things. Take the act of understanding what a square is (or what justice is or that a given syllogism is valid). Examine that act. It is real; you do understand. Yet that act remains indescribable except in its own super-sensible terms.

Hence, it is good to ask: "Is matter *identically* reality?" "Is matter the principle of reality in all real things?"⁷

Matter, as the materialists talk about it, is not something which we can experience. Matter is "in itself" always determinate. It becomes this or that, it acquires this or that structure. *Real* matter is always some *kind* of matter. As far as direct sense experience is concerned, we experience minerals, plants, animals, men, air, the planets, and so forth. But the determinability of "matter in itself" is more strikingly seen in the case of the supposedly ultimate particles or energy: these ultimate particles have definite electrical characteristics and a definite size;⁸ energy is always of some definite kind and quantity; a particle is always an electron or a proton or some other kind of particle (or "wave packet" or whatever other term scientists may find better). In other words, the "matter in itself," which is alleged to be the principle of reality, is itself a determinate genus that is determined by some other principle.

⁷ The first of these two questions implies the position of extreme materialism, which holds that *only* matter exists, so that matter is reality and all reality is matter. The second implies the position of a group of materialists who call themselves "modern materialists" and of dialectical materialists (Marxists); these materialists admit some realities—for example, ideas—which are not identical with matter but arise from matter, depend absolutely on matter, are real when they are *in* matter, and have no real effects on matter.

⁸ At the present time (1954), physicists hold that the electron (and other subatomic particles as well) does not have a completely determined size and position. Without going into an explanation of the nature of scientific theory (see Chap. XIV, sec. 100), this much at least is clear: subatomic particles have a definite quantum and kind of energy; their size is not completely indefinite but can be known within some limits; their location cannot be determined at the same time as their velocity, but it also is not completely indefinite.

But to be real is to be fully determinate. Why? Because to be determinate has a double implication: (1) to be *able* to be something or other and (2) at the present moment *not* to be it. We must then ask the question, Does it make sense to say, "That is virtue of which a real thing is determinate, and consequently *not* yet a definite reality, is simultaneously that in virtue of which every real thing is real"? Recall again the precise point of the present discussion. It is not to determine whether there is or is not an individual existing thing which is purely spiritual (without any matter at all); it is simply this, Is a real thing (material or not, as the case may be) real in virtue of some indeterminate "matter in itself"? In other words, Is there something even about a material thing which is not merely "matter in itself"?

(C) A third solution offered to the question, "What is it to be real?" is not quite so simple and naive as the first. In general, it consists in saying, "For a thing to be real is to be the *kind* of thing it is." For example, to be a *real* chair is simply to be a *chair*; to be a *real* dog is simply to be a *dog*. In formal and general terms, this doctrine can be summed up by saying, "To be real is to be an essence (quiddity)." We will label this type of explanation "essentialism." Historically, essentialism has taken four major forms?

(1) Platonic essentialism ascribes full reality to the "essence in itself"—for example, to the "horse in itself," "man in himself," "good in itself," and so on. These essences in themselves are the fully real things, but they are not immediately experienced. On the other hand, the things we immediately experience are real by sharing (participating) in the fully real tilings. Consequently, the principle of reality in the things we experience is that which is fully real in itself by being what it is. The essences in them-

* Many more divisions could be given, but our present purpose is sufficiently served by a consideration of these types. It is important to note that not every essentialism is realistic; in fact, many types of essentialism are purely idealistic; that is, they maintain that reality consists only of ideas. It will be interesting to recall this observation when we make our critique of essentialism.

selves are also called "separated forms" or "ideas." But this Platonic explanation replaces a question with a puzzle, for what is asserted is that the reality of x lies in its relation to y which is in itself and *also* somehow in x . What is this relation? How can the idea be both separated from particulars (in order to be real, in other words, to be a pure essence) and united to them (in order to give reality to them)?

(2) Because this relationship is essentially ambiguous and obscure many modern Platonists have abandoned the separation of the ideas and maintain that an individual or a real thing is constituted by the combination or intersection of many universals (for example, Peter is that particular thing constituted by the coming together of man, white, tall, slender, curly-haired, and so forth). But this theory has two defects: although a collection of universals may be less common than any single universal, it is still not really an individual (and we certainly have direct experience of individuals, ourselves for example); secondly, there is no effective way to distinguish between a real thing in the proper sense of the word and an essence or a possible thing (which is real only in the wide sense of the word). The Lone Ranger can be more fully described by many persons than Julius Caesar; yet the first is a fictional character and the second was real.

(3) The most subtle of the essentialist explanations is the Scotistic. According to the followers of Scotus, there are various kinds or degrees of reality (the *proper* meaning of "reality" is not directly admitted by them). The minimal degree of reality' is that of an object of thought; the next, that of an essence; the highest is that of an essence with haecceity (that is, the ultimately actual singularizing principle). For example, "man" is real with the reality of essence; "Peter" is fully real, having the reality both of essence and of singularity (in other words, he is "this man"). Now, it is true that the properly real is the singular (as we shall see later), and Scotism alone of the essentialist systems has seen the importance of preserving the singularity' of

things, but it has done it at some cost to the unity of the thing. And finally, if singularity makes the properly real, and if we can have fully determinate singulars among the objects of the mind, then even in this system we have no unambiguous answer to the question, 'What is it to be real?'

(4) There is another way of understanding the statement, "A thing is real because it is what it is." This way differs from all Platonic systems in interpreting differently *what* a thing is. For the sake of convenience, we shall attach this theory to the name of Averroës.¹⁰ According to the Averroistic theory, an essence is composed of two principles: matter (the potential principle of essential change) and form (the actualizing principle of specific determination). Neither matter nor form is real of itself; only the composite is real. This theory is not a materialism, for it holds that matter is only the potential principle of essence that individualizes the essence and so in the thing is the reason why it is *this* thing. Nor is the theory a simple essentialism, for form is not real of itself, but is the actualizing and specifying principle, which in the thing is the reason why it is this *kind* of thing. The Averroistic theory explains how material things are in different species and are capable of essential change. It does not answer the question, "What is it to be real?" and Averroës explicitly says that this is not even a good question.¹¹ Why is this so? As far as nonmaterial things are concerned, he says that they are actual by being what they are; and in this answer he shows himself to be at bottom an essentialist, with all the difficulties of essentialism. The basic difficulty of essentialism, as we recall, is that it provides no criterion of distinguishing between a properly real thing and a thing that is real only in the wide sense. Averroës does try to provide such a criterion. Material things, for him, are such as are generated, that is, caused in time from pre-existing things.

* For further information on Averroës, see the bibliographical references in n. 3.

u In his *Destructio Destructionum*, disp. 5.

This, of course, is true with regard to the things of our present sense experience, but it is not to the point. When we ask, "What does it mean to be real?" we are not asking about the efficient causes which produced the real thing. True, we understand something about the *kind* of reality a thing has when we know that it is not perpetual but has a temporal dimension. But to know that there are different kinds of reality still is not the same as knowing what it means to be real. Hence, any philosopher who says, "To be real is to have been caused," no matter how many valuable things he may have to tell us on other points, has missed the precise bearing of the question.

All the essentialists agree in this one point: to be real is to be *what* something is. It is perfectly true that of all the things of our experience, the question, "What is it?" can be asked. But when we answer the question, we still do not know *whether* it *is* or not. No matter how complicated the answer to the question, "What is it?," we still do not know whether the thing *is* or not. "Is it?" cannot be answered by telling *what* it is. For example, whether I say very vaguely, "I am thinking of something," or very concretely, "I am thinking of Queen Elizabeth's older brother," I cannot judge whether these objects are properly real or not by the extent to which they are determinate. In other words, I do not know, from even the most complete formal determination, whether I am thinking of something real in the proper sense of the word. And since our original question was, "What does it mean to be real, in the proper sense of that word?" we see that it is still unanswered.

In summary, then, these are the inadequate answers to the question we have considered: to be real is to perform some action, to be material, to be or to have an essence (whether this essence be universal or singular, whether it simply is or whether it is caused). All these things are true about the tilings of our experience, but they fail to consider the real as real. We must look somewhere else for our answer.

10. The Thomistic answer to the question: "What is it to be real?"

To discover what it is to be real, we need to look again at some real thing in the light of our previous discussion,¹² and we must begin with the only real things that we directly experience; namely, with singular things that are material and sensible. And we must consider some really existing thing immediately present to us (not merely some words designating a singular which is not now experienced as real). Let us take ourselves or some person immediately present to us. This person is performing *actions* by which we become aware of him; even in our own case, our awareness of ourselves arises from something we do or undergo. A person is material or sensible. A person is some *kind* of thing; he has a human nature and not some other kind of nature. These propositions are true (and the evidence for them is precisely the acting material thing which is a human person). But are they what we mean when we say, "I am," "He is"? Our being expresses itself in action; it is limited by materiality and by the nature we have; yet when we reflect on our own awareness of ourselves, each one of us sees immediately in his own highly personal experience: I am not simply any one of my actions (much less a collection of or sequence of actions). I am material, but that I *am* is not what I mean by materiality or vice versa. The same evidence will appear if we attentively consider another person.

Furthermore, the fact that *to be* is not identical with any nature is evident from the consideration that quite different natures all *are*. Each kind of thing is in its own way, of course, but nevertheless it truly and really *is*. *To be* is what is basically meant by "being *real* or a "*being*."

An indirect reflection may clarify this proper meaning of

"The discussion of three basic philosophical positions in the preceding section was not a proof or even a full philosophical refutation of them. The discussion was intended to clarify the meaning of the question about the real and to direct our attention to the various factors which ought to be considered.

"real." Suppose we compare a real human person here and now present in our experience with one of Shakespeare's characters, for example, with Falstaff. Both the real person and Falstaff are singular or individual; both have an intelligible essence—and even the same intelligible essence, that of humanity; both have the sensible qualities by which we know matter; both have particular words and actions of their own. Yet there is all the difference in the world between them: one is real; the other is an object of thought. And the most basic statement that we can make about them is that the real person is, exists, whereas the fictional character is not, does not have its own proper act of existing.

Hence, from the fact that the properly real is that which is, we get its proper technical name. The verb is has as its infinitive *to be*, and as its corresponding verbal noun, *being*. Hence, *being* in its first sense means "that which is" or "something having an act of existing." 18 For the phrase "act of existing" we will sometimes use the noun "esse"; for example, we might define "being" as "something having esse."

Since the properly real is that which *is*, and since metaphysics is the demonstrative knowledge of the real as real, we can express the object of metaphysics fully and accurately by the phrase "being as being," or in the fuller form, "whatever has an act of existing (esse) inasmuch as it is." That is why we call metaphysics the "philosophy of being." 11

Before we can proceed further in our investigation of being, however, we need to reflect carefully on our knowledge of being.¹¹¹

"The term "something" means "an individual object, known and expressed in an indeterminate, unspecified way." A real thing can be called "something"; so can fictional and mathematical objects. Hence, we can say technically, *something* directly signifies an indeterminately known essence and usually connotes existence. See above, sec. 6, on the definition of "thing" and below, secs. 12(a) and 72.

"This point is treated in Selected Passages, No. 4.

"See also below, sec. 19; the treatment of our knowledge of the being even of sensible things will not be completed until sec. 34.

11. Demonstrative knowledge and abstraction

To have a full understanding of being, it is necessary to reflect on how we know it. But first it will be necessary to consider other demonstrative knowledge with which we are more familiar in order to see similarities and differences. Knowledge, of course, is not a thing in itself. As an act, it is the act of a man who knows by his senses or his intellect or both; as a habit, it is a quality of a man. (Here we simply accept the fact that sense and intellect are different; in the philosophy of human nature these powers are considered in detail, and the kind of difference between them is proved.)¹⁰ The knowing subject is a man, not an intellect or a sense. It is by a figure of speech that we say, "The senses know this," and "The intellect knows that." It is, however, a convenient, shorthand way of speaking, and we shall often use it.

We have already seen that no demonstrative (scientific) knowledge concerns the singular as singular, in other words, that demonstrative knowledge is common or general in character.¹⁷ We should be careful not to assume from the start that all scientific knowledge is general in exactly the same way.¹⁸ Most demonstrative knowledges are universal, in the sense that they employ univocal concepts and terms.¹⁹ Univocal concepts deal with one characteristic of things that is common to many and leave differences out of consideration. Univocal concepts are derived, either immediately or mediately, by abstraction from

By spontaneous knowledge we know that intellect and sense are different. For a philosophical examination of the nature of the difference and a proof that intellect and sense are essentially different, see G. P. Klubertanz, S.J., *Philosophy of Human Nature* (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), pp. 158-164.

¹⁰ See above, sec. 4.

¹⁷ "The kind of generality which metaphysical knowledge has will be examined in Chap. III.

¹⁸ A univocal term, as we know from logic, is one that is applied in exactly the same sense to many individual things, for example, "gold," "frog," "chair." See below, sec. 18.

material tilings.²⁰ When, in the understanding of a material thing, we consider one characteristic, trait, or aspect of it and omit others, we are said to "abstract" from the latter. The two simplest kinds of abstraction are called "total" and "formal."

The verj name, "total abstraction," is a kind of misnomer, but it is traditional and has a certain value. Suppose we consider the existing individual or being as fully determinate (for example, Peter) and then drop out of consideration the individual determinations and limitations; the result is an abstract consideration of the whole being indeterminately. When I look at a particular pencil, a particular piece of paper, a particular human being and know them as pencil, paper, and man, I have performed an act of total abstraction ("total," because each of these nouns designates a whole and entire thing [not merely a part]; "abstraction," because the definite individual characteristics are omitted from consideration). Total abstraction can be carried further than this; that is, the being can be known more indeterminately, according to a more and more ultimate genus. For example, Peter can be known not only as man but as animal or living thing. The limit of this kind of abstraction is "material substance";²¹ this is the *matter* with which some physical sciences deal. Total abstraction is sometimes called the "first degree of abstraction."

"Formal abstraction" is almost a reverse type of abstraction. In this second type, a formal determinant is considered apart from, and independently of, others. A verj' clear example is found in the knowledge of number, figure, and surface, which can be con-

* There are various ways in which univocal concepts arise. Those derived immediately from sensible things are gained by simple abstraction. Other univocal concepts are made by combinations of the first kind, by second-level abstraction (see n. 22), and by mental construction (see secs. 100 and 107). For the relation of such concepts to real things, see below, sec. 74.

"If we attempt to carry total abstraction further, we no longer have knowledge of a real thing; perhaps we come to a being of reason, "no-thing conceived of as the indeterminate possibility of being" (cf. sec. 74, on beings of reason). It is true that we can understand "substance" without understanding it as material, but this is done, not by way of abstraction but by way of separation; see below, sec. 12(b).

sidered by the intellect apart from the sensible qualities with which they are associated in the real order. This kind of abstraction consists in considering an accidental form (or a perfection considered after the manner of an accidental form—see Chapters XII and XIII) apart from the other perfections of a being, provided that this accidental form does not depend upon these other perfections for its intelligibility. “Formal abstraction” is often called the “second degree of abstraction”; it is connected with such operations as counting and measuring.

In general, abstraction²² in its proper sense is an act of simple and absolute consideration, which consists in apprehending one characteristic or intelligibility (*ratio*) without another with which it is associated in the real order. Now, we learn in logic that an act of absolute consideration belongs to the first act of the mind, the simple apprehension. We also know from logic that the object of simple apprehension is an essence or quiddity.

In summary, a consideration of most scientific knowledge yields these general conclusions. Most scientific knowledges deal with strictly universal and univocal concepts. Such concepts are the result of at least total abstraction; formal abstraction may also be involved, as well as other types of abstraction. In any abstraction something is always omitted from the object, and an abstraction, in the strict sense, is an act of simple apprehension directed to an absolute consideration of an essence. Is Metaphysics like other scientific knowledges? Is its object abstract or not?

" In addition to these two basic types of abstraction, there are other, more complicated types of abstraction, that for convenience' sake we will call "second-level" abstraction. Whereas both total and formal abstractions have their point of departure in the real thing, a second-level abstraction has its point of departure in a previous knowledge; for example, "humanity," which is the intelligible form (intelligibility) of man, arises by second-level abstraction from "man," which is itself a product of total abstraction. Second-level abstractions are more properly called constructions than abstractions, but there is some similarity, in that the products of second-level abstraction also contain less than the initial stage from which they are derived.

12. Our knowledge of being as being

We must approach the problem of our knowledge of the object of metaphysics in two stages, for there are two knowledges of being—the primitive notion of being (which St. Thomas mentions as *ens primum cognitum*), and the being which is the object of metaphysics, namely, being as being.

A. THE PRIMITIVE NOTION OF BEING

Do we reach being by abstraction?²⁸ First of all, abstraction, even total abstraction, always leaves some part of our initial reality out of consideration. Now, if we were to say that "being" is reached by abstraction from a real being, we would imply that there is in the real thing some not-being, which is left out of consideration; but since not-being is nothing, nothing can be left out of consideration. Secondly, abstraction pertains to the first operation of the mind (simple apprehension) and so concerns only essences.²⁴ But being is "some definite individual which is," and

"The subsequent discussion is a straightforward phenomenological analysis of experience. For those who approach this problem with preconceptions (philosophical or otherwise), the following points may be made, (a) The human *intellect* (not just the human knower) does know singulars. (See G. P. Klubertanz, S.J., "St. Thomas and the Knowledge of the Singular." *The New Scholasticism*, XXVI [1952], 135-166). (b) The doctrine of the three degrees of abstraction is not a complete analysis of *all* knowledge, but only of scientific knowledge; it ignores perceptual knowledge, (c) The metaphysician, the philosophical psychologist, and the epistemologist will see that the "commonness" of metaphysical conceptions, principles, and propositions is not arrived at by abstraction (properly so called) but by separation and related processes. The logician (who ignores processes and meanings and considers only terms) calls all nonsingular terms abstract and measures their "distance" from sensation in terms of degrees. Hence, since metaphysics can conclude to beings which cannot be sensed at all, the logician will consider it the "most abstract" of all sciences, in the "third degree of abstraction." For a person to insist on doing metaphysics as if it were logic is to doom the whole metaphysical enterprise to ruin from the start.

* By the term "essence" we mean that which we name, describe, or define (that is, as *what* it is). The term "quiddity" is an unfamiliar term for "essence." The statement in the text is not meant to imply that all the objects of apprehension are simple concepts; there are some very complicated objects which we will consider below briefly in sec. 74.

so *to be*, to have an act of existing, is other than and different from the "definite essence" in the being (the "definite individual which is"). Hence, the act of existing cannot be brought into a concept by any type of abstraction properly so called. And if the act of existing is not included in being in some way, then we do not have being. Hence, for both of the reasons advanced above, being cannot be reached by abstraction. In other words, the knowledge of being is not a simple concept (apprehension) of an essence.

There are, however, other forms of intellectual knowledge, namely, judgment and reasoning. Judgment is that act of the mind by which we assert (or deny) that something *is*, or *is* modified in some way or other. Judgment, therefore, directly reaches the *esse* of a thing. In other words, in a judgment we know *that* a thing is. The judgment, it is true, virtually²⁵ contains an apprehension of an essence. We cannot assert "is" without at least implicitly understanding something ("this," "it," and so on). But what is special and peculiar to the judgment is that a direct perceptual judgment is the knowledge that some existent *is*.

The things that we directly and immediately assert to exist are the sensible things of our experience, and the judgments that we make about immediately experienced things are called perceptual judgments. The act of existing thus attained is the *esse* of a material, singular thing.

When we have experienced at least two sensible things and judged that "This is" and "That is," we can reflect and see that neither "this" nor "that" is simply identical with "is," even though each one of the subjects is a singular subject. When we see that "is" is not proper and peculiar to either "this thing" or "that thing," we discover a common intelligibility, "Something is."

When we go from "This is" and "That is" to "Something is," we disengage the latter intelligibility from its original presenta-

²⁵The term "virtually" means here: "does not actually contain an apprehension as a distinct act but has a function equivalent to that of an apprehension."

tion in the completely singular sensible tiling. But we do not do this by any kind of abstraction, for we leave nothing out. The "something" in the judgment "Something is" expresses indefinitely a completely determined, singular thing (not a general essence). This nonabstractive movement from a particular judgment or judgments to a common judgment wherein the singularity is implicit (that is, not explicitly known and stated), we will call the "judgment of implicitation."²⁶ The "commonness" of the "something" in the judgment "Something is" is not that of an abstract universal, but rather that of a particular with an indefinite reference to singulars (Peter, Prince, this chair).

From the judgment "Something is" we can form a complex apprehension²⁷ of "something which is," "something having esse." This complex apprehension is primarily a judgment but is expressed briefly by the noun "being."

B. THE METAPHYSICAL KNOWLEDGE OF BEING

But the being that we derive from sensible things by direct perceptual judgments and the judgment of implicitation is precisely the being of *sensible* things, not being as being. Hence, we have not yet reached the being of metaphysics. Can we go from *sensible* being to the being of metaphysics by abstraction? If we suppose that we do, we would imply either that (1) a sensible tiling

**The coined term "implication" is used to indicate that the knowledge which is common by indefinite reference is a nonabstractive knowledge of singulars. Some authors, borrowing an expression from Cajetan, call the process "abstraction by confusion." A student—at least an English-speaking one—will be confused by a misleading translation of what was at best an awkward term.

In principle, the judgment of implicitation could arise from the insight into the difference between "this" and "is." In practice, the experience of several things is the ordinary ground for the judgment of implicitation.

²¹A simple apprehension or concept is an act by which the mind grasps a nature or quiddity without affirming or denying, but simply considering it absolutely in itself. In addition to this sort of understanding, there is another type of conception, which, although not an explicit judgment, has arisen from a preceding judgment in such a way that the judgmental function of knowledge of esse remains. Cf. Klubertanz, *The Philosophy of Human Nature*, pp. 178-180.

contains both sensible being and being as being, so that we can abstract from the former to have only the latter, or (2) that the "sensible" part of *sensible being* is nonbeing and so can be abstracted from to have pure being. Both of these alternatives have no ground in our experience: we directly see a sensible tiling which is, and that-which-is in a sensible thing is-sensibly. Hence, the supposition that we reach being as being by abstraction is false.²⁸

Let us re-examine the process we used above when we tried to determine what it means to be real.²⁸ We saw that all the beings of our experience are indeed sensible and material. But reflection on our own acts of intellectual knowing and willing kept us from making a facile identification of being with materiality. Rather, the nonsensible reality of thinking and willing forced us to engage in a further inspection of the sensible real. Now, a sensible reality is (1) some kind of thing, which is (2) acting or being acted on, and is (3) singular, (4) sensible, and (5) material. We examined each one of these aspects of a sensible thing and saw that either singly or taken together they are indeed real—provided the thing in question truly *is*. But equally it became clear that although the thing happens to be a singular material thing, it is not *real because of* its singularity or its materiality and sensibility, or because of its essence or action, but precisely because it is (exists). In other words, over and above the direct perceptual judgment that "This is," we make a negative judgment, inasmuch as we see that "It is not precisely because of matter and so forth that the thing is." This special negative judgment is called "separation,"⁸⁰ for by it we separate the intelligibility of what it means to be from the intelligibility of what a sensible, material, quiddity or essence is.³¹

* One of the reasons for this is taken up in Selected Passages, No. 7.

* Sec above, secs. 9 and 10.

"Some authors call separation "abstraction in the wide sense," or "the third degree of abstraction." These expressions are confusing at best; see above, n. 23; at worst, they betray abstractionism and essentialism.

"This point is discussed in Selected Passages, No. 5.

Perhaps it will help us to understand the judgment of separation if we consider it as a summary negation including a series of specific negations which are probably not made all at once. Most likely, the first of these negations is the understanding that reality is not a "property" of any particular thing or due to any form of singularity. Next, we may come to realize that activity is not identical with reality when we learn that things remain real even when we do not experience their action. Then, we come to understand that sensibility' is not identical with reality', for even popular science tells us of realities that we cannot sensibly experience. As we come closer to a philosophical grasp of being, we see that matter is not simply the whole of reality or the principle of reality, even in a material thing; this we see when we come to understand that matter is potential and determinable. Finally, by a still more difficult reflection, we come to understand that essence is not identical with reality and being, and this we do partly by reflection on the many, widely differing kinds of tilings that exist and partly by reflection on essences that are mere objects of thought.³²

In the formation, therefore, of the complex intelligibility of "being as being," we make two judgments:³³ (1) "This (sensible) thing is," and (2) "Even for this sensible thing *to be* is not the same as for it to be a particular sensible or material thing with a definite essence." This judgment does not imply that we know that an immaterial being exists or that we think that such a being is possible.³⁴ At the present stage of our investigation, we do not

^{**} This consideration is clinched by a detailed investigation of real change, for if "to be an essence" were identical with "to be or to exist" change would be impossible; see below, sec. 34.

"Two judgments are necessary, not three, because the judgment of separation can do all that the judgment of impication does and more. However, someone may take this in three steps: (1) the perceptual judgment; (2) the judgment of impication; (3) the judgment of separation.

M It is extremely important to note that just as a material being is not a being because it is material, but because it is, so, too, an immaterial being (if such there be) is not a being because it is immaterial, but because it is. In general, the *kind* of essence a being has does not make it a being; whatever its essence, it is a being because and inasmuch as it is.

Hence, it is illusory to attempt to base a knowledge of being as being on

know demonstratively that there are immaterial beings. The second of these two judgments—the judgment of separation—may sometimes be only implicit, in the way in which it is implied, for example, in the explanatory phrase, "Being as being is something which is *inasmuch as it is*."

In this analysis of the beings of our experience and of our knowledge of them, we have been dealing throughout with sensible, material existents. The point of our consideration has been to establish a scientific knowledge of the properly real. We have seen that a real thing which exists, is material, has a singular essence, and acts *is real* precisely because it exists; and that in such a thing, that in virtue of which it *is* is an act—its act of existing. The scientific understanding⁵ of the properly real, "being as being/ is formed through an implicitly double judgment, in which we have our first explicit knowledge of existence.

13. The first principles of knowledge

A principle of knowledge is some knowledge from which some other knowledge follows or flows. In reasoning, the premises are the principles of the conclusion. But not all principles are *first* principles, for some principles are themselves conclusions from some other premises. A first principle is one that is not proved from or developed from some other, prior principle. There are first principles in every demonstrative knowledge, though it can often happen that some of the first principles of some science (for example, physics) are developed in another science (for example, mathematics). If we want to speak of first principles, we must therefore distinguish between first principles in some particular order and absolutely first principles. In the absolute sense of first

the demonstrated existence of immaterial things. Either "is" is freed from its sensible and changing context (prior to the proof of the existence of immaterial being, and thus is meaningful when we conclude to the existence of such being) or "is" remains as we first find it immersed in sensibility and change. In the latter case, "is" means "is sensible, material and changeable," and to assert that "An *immaterial, immobile* thing is *sensible, material and changeable*" is a contradiction.

- See also below, sec. 20, on the "unity" of the knowledge of being.

principles, sense experience is a first principle of human knowledge.

In the order of intellectual knowledge itself there are two first principles, one in the order of apprehension, the other in the order of judgment. In the order of apprehension, being is the first principle, for, as will be shown in the philosophy of human nature, being is the proper object of the intellect, and every concept, other than being, is understood in some relation to, or as an elaboration or determination of, being. In the order of judgment, the first principle, on which all judgments rest, is the "principle of contradiction": "It is impossible to affirm and deny the same thing of the same subject at the same time." We can also state the principle of contradiction in terms of being: "A thing cannot both be and not be at the same time." 30

Because metaphysics is the demonstrative knowledge of the real as real, we must briefly consider, in a preliminary way, a question that has been asked by various philosophers throughout the whole history of philosophy, namely, "Can there be a reality which cannot be known by us?" If we are working with a concept of essence or with the common notion of being, then we will not be able to answer the question at this point, and perhaps we would have to give an affirmative answer. But if we are working with being as *being*, then we can say immediately, "Any alleged or proved reality, since it will be, in some sense of the word, *something*, and since it will *be*, can be known by us as being." 37 And in the same way the principle of contradiction will be applicable to any present or proved or alleged reality.

The truth, as well as the absolute applicability, of the principle of contradiction is known simply in understanding that principle. We discover that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time when we experience something which is, understand it, and reflect and compare it with its opposite. If we ask, "Where and

* Per se known principles are mentioned briefly in Selected Passages, No. 6.

" This point will be taken up again in secs. 64 and 74.

how do we find the principle of contradiction?" the clear answer is: "Inductively, in experience." If we ask, "How or where do we know the truth and universality of that judgment?" the answer is "In itself, that is, in what we understand when we affirm that a thing cannot both be and not be at the same time." In other words, when we experience a being and understand the act of existing, it is precisely that act and our insight into it that grounds our judgment. For this reason, a principle like this is called "per se known" or "analytic."³⁸

Sometimes it helps our understanding of a per se known proposition to take a negative and dialectical approach to it, in other words, to try to see whether we can suppose it to be false. Suppose a man were to say, "It is true that affirming and denying the same thing can be done at the same time." In that case, his affirmation itself is affected by what he says, so that the affirmation does not exclude a simultaneous negation—in other words, his affirmation turns out to be meaningless. In other words, no man can really *think* the opposite of the principle of contradiction, although he can form a meaningless string of words which looks like a denial of that principle.

14. Definitions

A *real* tiring, in the proper sense of the word, is an actually existing thing, one which exists in itself and is not merely an object of thought.

"An analytic principle is one which can be discovered to be true from an analysis of what it says. When the term "analytic" is used as here defined, it is correct to call *first* principles analytic. But there are other meanings of the term which are not suitable. (1) The Kantian meaning ("An analytic proposition is one in which the predicate is drawn out of the subject by analysis") cannot be applied to any of the principles of metaphysics. (2) There is another meaning which implies that both of the terms which compose the proposition are first known separately by two distinct simple apprehensions, then the content of each apprehension is analyzed, and finally the judgment is made. Such a process is possible in some per se known propositions (for example, in the proposition, "Incorporeal things do not occupy space"), but certainly it is not possible with the principle of contradiction or with many other principles, such as the principle of causality.

A real thing, in the wide sense of the word, is something which is, was, will be, or at least can be.

Materialism is the philosophical doctrine that tilings are real inasmuch as they are material.

Essentialism is the philosophical doctrine that things are real inasmuch as they are or have an essence or quiddity.

Being is something having esse (an act of existing).

Being as being is something having esse inasmuch as it is, exists.

A univocal concept is one which is true of many individuals in exactly the same sense.

Abstraction is the act of considering one intellegibility of a thing without considering others with which it is associated in the real order.

Intelligibility is a characteristic, trait, or aspect (of a thing) which can be understood by the intellect (*ratio*).

Total abstraction is the consideration of the nature or quiddity of a thing without consideration of its individual determinants.

Formal abstraction is the consideration of the formal determinants of a thing apart from other determinants of that same thing.

Implication is the making implicit or suppression of the singularity of a singular thing without abstracting it.

Judgment is that act of the mind by which we assert (or deny) that a tiling is (was, will be), or that it is modified in some way.

Simple apprehension is the simple and absolute grasp of *what* a thing is (concept).

Complex apprehension is an intellectual grasp of an intelligibility by way of or through a judgment.

Separation is a negative judgment: a judgment by which we deny that one (thing or intelligibility) is another.

15. Summary of the argument

A. *The real is properly being.*

The real tilings of our immediate experience, though they are sensible and therefore material, are real, not because they are ma-

terial or because they are what they are or because they are singular but because they are, exist.

Comment. To be real does not mean to be material, because matter in itself is determinable and is not the principle of actuality and determination; nor does it mean to be acting, because acting follows being; nor does it mean to have an essence or to be singular, because quiddity and essence do not serve to distinguish the properly real from the real in the wide sense and so cannot be the principle of the properly real.

B. Being as being is not reached by abstraction but by separation.

The act of abstraction belongs to the first operation of the mind, which concerns quiddities or essences and leaves something out of consideration. But being is not merely a quiddity, and there is nothing outside of being which could be left out. Yet being as being is not the same as being material, and tin's denial or negative judgment is called separation.

16. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, q. 7, art. 2, ad 9 (that is, the seventh question, the second article, answer to the ninth argument; this answer is a very condensed but comprehensive expression of the primacy of esse); *Contra Gentiles*, Bk. II, Chap. 54 (especially the paragraphs beginning "First" and "Secondly"; this passage explains that the *whole* thing is that-which-is); *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 5, art. 1. ad 1 (the meaning of "being," in comparison with the meaning of "Good"); *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 40, art. 3; *Compendium of Theology*, Chap. 62 (these two passages speak of the two types of abstraction).

Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2d ed. (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), pp. 203-205, on the difference between the simple concept and the judgment, and on our knowledge of esse.

Robert J. Henle, S.J., "Existentialism and the Judgment," *Proceedings of the American Catholic Philosophical Association*, Vol. XXVI (1946), pp. 40-53. This is a detailed and very penetrating analysis of the importance of the act of existing in the philosophy of being and of the judgment as our only adequate knowledge of esse.

Oliver Martin, "An Examination of Contemporary Naturalism and

Materialism," *Return to Reason*, ed. John Wiki (Chicago, Regnery, 1953), pp. 68-91; an excellent study of the inadequacy of materialism.

Wihnon H. Sheldon, "Critique of Naturalism," *Journal of Philosophy*, XLII (1945), 253-270; pertinent to our present interest is the critique of naturalism as a form of materialism.

Gerard Smith, S.J., "Before You Start Talking about God," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXIII (1945), 31-32; the importance of a properly metaphysical understanding of being.

John Wild, "What is Realism?" *Journal of Philosophy*, XLIV (1947), 148-158, discusses the meaning of "real"; the main stress of this article is on the opposition to various more or less mitigated forms of idealism.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

4. *What Is the Subject of Metaphysics?*

. . . [Aristotle] says, first, that there is a demonstrative knowledge, which considers being as being, as its subject, and considers also "those things which of themselves [per se] are in being," that is, the per se properties of being.

But he says, "as being," because other demonstrative knowledges, which deal with particular beings, do indeed consider being—for all the subjects of knowledge are beings—yet do not consider being as being, but as it is some kind of being, that is, "number," or "line" or "fire" or something of this sort.

He says also, "which of themselves are in this," and not simply, which are in this, to show that it does not belong to this demonstrative knowledge to consider those things which accidentally are in its subject, but only those things which of themselves are in it. . . . This demonstrative knowledge, whose subject is being, should not consider all the things which accidentally are in being, because thus it would consider everything which is considered in all kinds of knowledge, for everything is in some sense being, but not inasmuch as it is being. . . . The necessity of this knowledge which considers being and its per se properties, is clear from this, that these things should not remain unknown, since the knowledge of other things depends on them, as the knowledge of proper objects depends on common ones. . . .

Here he shows that this knowledge is not one of the particular knowledges, from this consideration. No particular knowledge considers being universally as such, but only some part of being divided from other parts. And about this part it considers the per se properties. . . . But the common knowledge considers universal being as being, and so it is not the same as any of the particular knowledges. . . .

Here he shows that this demonstrative knowledge, which we have before us, has being as its subject, this way. Every principle is of itself the principle and cause of some nature. But we are seeking the first principles of things, and the highest causes (as was said in the first book); and these are of themselves causes of some nature. But this is only the nature of being. And this is clear from this, that all philosophers, investigating the elements inasmuch as they are beings, sought this kind of principles, namely the first and highest. Therefore in this demonstrative knowledge we are seeking the principles of being as being. Therefore being is the subject of this knowledge, for every demonstrative knowledge seeks the proper causes of its subject.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. IV, lect.
1 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 529-
533).*

5. *Abstraction Contrasted with Separation*

The response. It is to be said that for the evidence of this question we must know how the intellect can abstract according to its operation. We must know therefore that according to the Philosopher in the third book of the *De Anima*, there are two operations of the intellect: one which is called "the understanding of indivisibles," by which it knows what anything is; the other, by which it composes and divides, that is, by forming an affirmative or negative proposition. These two operations correspond to two (principles) in the thing. The first operation considers the very nature of the thing, according to which it has a definite place among beings, whether it be a complete thing, like a whole, or an incomplete thing, as a part or an accident. But the second operation considers the very *esse* of the thing, which follows from the coming together of the principles in a composite thing, or accompanies the simple nature of the thing, as in simple substances. And because the truth of the intellect lies in this, that it is conformed to the thing, it is clear that according to this operation, the intellect cannot truly abstract what is joined together in the thing, because, in abstracting, a separation according to the *esse* of the thing would be signified, as, if I abstract man from whiteness, saying "man is not white," I mean there is a separation in the thing. Hence, if in the real order man and whiteness are not separated, the understanding will be false. And so according to this operation the intellect cannot truly abstract except such things which are separated in the real order, as in saying, "Man is not an ass." But according to the first operation of the mind, it can abstract things which in the real order are not separate, not all indeed, but some. . . .

Thus the intellect distinguishes one from another in different ways according to different operations, because, according to the operation

by which it composes and divides, it distinguishes one from another in this, that it understands one not to be in the other. But in the operation by which it understands what everything is, it distinguishes one from another, inasmuch as it understands what this is, understanding nothing about something else, neither that it be with the other, nor separated from it. This latter distinction, therefore, is not properly called separation, but only the former. . . . Since abstraction cannot take place, properly speaking, except of things which are joined together in reality, according to the two modes of conjunction (that is, the way in which the part and the whole are united, or form and matter), there are two kinds of abstraction: one by which form is abstracted from matter, the other by which the whole is abstracted from the parts. . . .

And so there are two abstractions of the intellect: one which corresponds to the union of form and matter or accident and subject, and this is the abstraction of the form from sensible matter; the other, which corresponds to the union of the whole and the part, and to this there corresponds the abstraction of the universal from the particular, which is an abstraction of the whole, in which some absolute nature is considered according to its essential intelligibility. . . . But in such things which can be divided according to their *esse*, we rather have separation than abstraction.

Thus, in the operation of the intellect there is a threefold distinction. There is one according to the operation of the intellect composing and dividing, which is properly called separation, and this belongs to the divine knowledge or metaphysics. There is another according to the operation by which the quiddities of things are formed, which is the abstraction of a form from sensible matter, and this belongs to mathematics. There is a third, according to the same operation, of the universal from the particular, and this belongs also to physics, and is [in some way] common to all knowledges, for in every demonstrative knowledge we omit what is accidental and take what is *per se*.

Commentary on Boethius's
De Trinitate, q. 5, art. 3.

6. *Principles Known Per Se*

Those things which are *per se* known to us, are made known immediately by sense experience, for example, when a whole and a part are seen, we immediately know that ever)' whole is larger than its part, and we know this without any investigation. Therefore the Philosopher says, "We know principles when we know their terms" (*Posterior Analytics*, I).

Commentary on the First Book
of the Sentences, dis. 3, q. 1,
art. 2.

7. *Abstraction and the Knowledge of Immaterial Substance*

A certain philosopher, called Avempacé, held that through the understanding of material substances, following the true principles of philosophy, we could arrive at an understanding of immaterial substances. For, he contended, our intellect has such a nature that it can abstract the quiddity of a material thing from matter; if there is still something material left in that quiddity, the intellect can abstract once again; and since there cannot be an infinite series of material principles in a quiddity, finally the intellect can arrive at an understanding of some quiddity which is entirely without matter. And this, he maintains, is to understand an immaterial substance.

This reasoning would be effective, if the immaterial substances were the forms and essences of the material things present to us, as the Platonists maintain. If we do not take this position, but rather take the position that immaterial substances are of an entirely different kind than the quiddities of material things, then, however much our intellect abstracts the quiddity of a material thing from matter, it will never obtain anything even similar to an immaterial substance. Therefore through material substances we cannot perfectly know immaterial substance.

. . . immaterial substances cannot be known by us in such a way that we apprehend their quiddities, but we can learn something about them through the way of removal [separation] and of relation to material things.

Summa Theologiae, Pl. I, q.
88, art. 2 and ad 2.

CHAPTER III

The First Analogy of Being

17. The fact of knowledge in common

We have already seen that some kind of common knowledge of individuals is necessary for every kind of organized, demonstrative (scientific) knowledge. By “common knowledge” we mean a single knowledge that is true of many things. For instance, it is true of any sample of water that water is H_2O . So, too, the law of freely falling bodies is true of any and all such bodies; the laws of learning are verified in their way in every case of learning; the theory of the cellular structure of living things is applicable to a great variety of living things. And similar examples of common knowledge can be drawn from any science, from mathematics, logic, and philosophy.

Sometimes, logicians and grammarians speak of equivocal terms as common. An equivocal term is one and the same term (same in sound or spelling) that has different senses and signifies different kinds of things. An example of an equivocal term is “bank,” which can mean the ground bordering a river or an establishment for the keeping and lending of money. We can speak of an equivocal term if we refer to an external sign. But an equivocal term does not imply common knowledge, because equivocal terms have entirely different meanings.¹

18. Univocation and its basis

The kind of common knowledge with which we should be most familiar is *univocation*. By univocation we mean the use of one

¹ Kinds of common terms are spoken of in Selected Passages, No. 8.

and the same term and its corresponding knowledge to apply to each of many individuals in the same sense. Examples of univocation can be found in the use of everyday terms like “water/“sheep,” “tree,” as well as in scientific terms like “vertebrate,” “triangle,” “syllogism.” A univocal term is given its name because of the identity of meaning (*uni-* means one; *-vocation* here means naming). Often a univocal term is called a *universal* because it can be applied to all the individuals of a given kind in exactly the same sense.

How can one and the same term rightly be applied to a number of individuals which are different? how can one and the same act of knowledge include (explicitly or implicitly) many different individuals? There must be a double basis for this. We have already seen the basis for univocation when we considered abstraction; because some knowledge abstracts from particularities we can deal with what-things-are univocally. But in order that abstraction be legitimate, there must be some kind of distinction between what-a-thing-is and its particularity. For the present, we are not going to consider what this distinction is or on what it is based. It is enough if there is some kind of distinction between the essence of a thing (what-a-thing-is) and its particularity.²

19. Is being a universal?

We have already seen that our knowledge of being is not an abstract knowledge, and consequently it cannot have the same kind of community that an abstract knowledge has. But we must investigate the basis for this more closely.

First of all, individuals are or exist. Can we convert this proposition and say, “All existents are individuals?” We can approach the answer to this question by considering whether nonindividuals can exist.

Now, a nonindividual is either a *formal* (or reflex) *universal* or a *simple universal* (an absolute nature). A formal universal is defined as that which is known to be common to many and pred-

¹ This distinction is considered in detail in sec. 33.

icated of them (for example, the species "man," the genus "animal"). If a formal universal were to exist as such, as existing it would be not common, but a distinct thing in itself. But it is a contradiction to suppose that one and the same thing should be both common and not common at the same time. Hence, the supposition that "A formal universal exists" is false.

A simple universal or absolute nature is that which is absolutely meant by terms like "man," "horse," "animal," "car," and so forth. It is that which we predicate whenever we predicate a noun or attribute of a subject. As such, it is not formally universal (else it could not be predicated of many); it is neither really existing nor a mere object of thought. Now, some thinkers suppose that such absolute natures exist, either in themselves or as distinct elements in things. For example, in the horse Citation, there are said to be as many distinct nonindividual elements as there are distinct ways of knowing what Citation is (for example, horse, swift, rangy)- But this supposition involves a number of unintelligible or contradictory consequences: that something which is potential (can be either singular or universal) is also actual, namely, an actual element of a real thing; that something can be neither singular nor not-singular (that is, not merely be *considered* abstractly, but *be* abstractly), and therefore that contradictory propositions are not completely opposed to each other; that the real thing is composed of distinct elements, each of which taken singly is indifferent or neutral to reality'. But any supposition that involves impossible or unreal consequences is not true. Therefore it is not true that an absolute nature or essence exists as such.

Hence, only individuals exist, or, all existents are individuals. Being means that which is, and so it includes the particularity' of that which is. But being does not determinately include the particular; in other words, being does not necessarily mean this thing or that thing; it means *any*, or, *a* thing. This special way' of signifying the particular as particular we shall call "indefinite reference," because it makes use of the indefinite article to signify a very definite, concrete, singular thing.

Consequently, being is not a univocal nor a universal term. Being is not univocal, for whenever we assert that something *is*, we speak of a unique individual which has an act of existing all its own. Hence, being is not universal, for no two individuals can be exactly alike inasmuch as they exist.

20. Being is analogous

Thus far we have seen a number of points which are the data for the problem of the community of being. We will consider them in summary form.

- (1) Only concrete individuals exist and can exist in the real order.
- (2) An individual real thing is an existent and formally a being because of its act of existing, not because it is material or is what-it-is.

Nevertheless, the beings of our experience are material things of a particular kind.

- (3) Being that is presented to us by the real existents of which we have direct experience includes both a thing-element and *esse*.

Being is an intelligibility, the *ratio entis*; it is that which we understand when we know a real thing as a being.

- (4) Each existent presents itself as an individual thing distinct from all other things, that is, as a unique subject of *esse*.

In other words, each individual thing is a unique way or mode (manner) of having *esse*.

- (5) As the subjects of *esse* differ from each other, so also do the existential acts.

For example, this dog's existential act is different from that dog's, just as this dog is different from that.

- (6) Hence, each individual thing exists with its own act of existing.

It would be foolish to imagine that one thing or person could exist with the act of existing of another.

(7) And yet *being* is realized in each existent.

Every real thing is manifestly a singular definite thing having its *esse*.

Thus, *being* is *common* to all things.³

But the problem is *how* being is common. Being, in any singular existent, cannot be entirely and exactly the same as it is in any other thing. It must in each instance be and be known as a definite singular thing uniquely ordered to its own act of existing. It must in each instance include all that is unique and proper to the singular individual, and so it cannot be an univocal intelligibility. Since, on the other hand, the intelligibility, being, is presented to us by, and verified in, any singular concrete existent, being cannot be equivocal. (As we have already seen, no intelligibility can be equivocal; only terms can be equivocal.) Being, therefore, is somehow midway between univocation and equivocation, and hence we say it is *analogous*, that is, similar.

Being is never presented by any two beings as *exactly* the same. In other words, *being*, as presented by one existent, is al-

*Though most Thomists subscribe to the formula of Cajetan, "being is simply many, but one *secundum quid*," they also maintain that it is one concept and is *predicated* analogously. Is there one *concept* of being? Of course, there are all sorts of "concepts of being," from Hegel to Sartre; even some self-styled Thomists have a "concept" which they call "being"—one, unique, confusedly containing all its inferiors, and so on. Such a *concept* is *not* the being which is the subject of metaphysics.

Because beings are analogous, they cannot be correctly understood in any *one concept*. But long familiarity has accustomed us to use the unity (even if it is only partial and derivative) and ignore the multiplicity (even though it is basic).

Most philosophers want to go too rapidly; they overlook the basic importance of the verb *is*. For the first problem of metaphysics is, "What does *is* mean?" "How do we predicate *is* of differing individuals?" The verb-predicate "*is*" should be investigated before we even ask about the attributive noun, "*being*." We understand and assert *is* analogously, and this analogy demands our first attention. The failure to realize that *is* can be a verb which expresses existential act is the capital fault of logicism (or essentialism) and distorts both the ordinary spontaneous experience of individuals as well as metaphysics. To substitute a noun and a concept for the verb is a serious error. At best, the problem of metaphysics is poorly expressed as a problem of unity amidst diversity; at worst, *being* is turned into an essence or form in order that it may have a true conceptual unity.

See also below, sec. 72.

ways and necessarily and intrinsically different from the being presented by another. From one existent I derive one intelligibility; from another, another; and so on. These intelligibilities are alike only inasmuch as each unique intelligibility is proportionally similar to any other. And they are intelligible according to this proportional likeness. That is to say, we can and do recognize that as this unique thing is to its unique act of existing, so any other unique thing is to its unique act of existing. When we intellectually compare any one being as a being with any other being, we recognize this proportional relationship. The individual, unique way (manner, potency, capacity) of having an act of existing in each instance precludes the forming of an univocal intelligibility.⁴ What we form, if we proceed aright according to the demands of the real order, is *many intelligibilities* proportionally alike. As long as these intelligibilities remain direct knowledge of the real as it is, they are simply irreducible to one intelligibility.⁵ So when we speak of *being* we are merely saying indefinitely, "any unique thing having its own act of existing," thereby expressing the obvious diversity of any one being from any other, and, at the same time, the recognizable proportional likeness that obtains among beings.

The likeness or similarity of beings can be stated in other words. The unique way in which this singular thing is related to its esse, and vice versa, is similar to the unique way in which any other singular individual is related and proportioned to its esse, and vice versa. We can represent to ourselves this situation by the following diagram:

This particular thing (A)		That particular thing (B)
its own esse	' '	its own esse,

and so on. Things in the real order—according to their intelli-

*See above, secs. 11 and 12.

• See above, n. 3, and below, sec. 72.

• This "relation" is not a predicamental but a "transcendental" relation; see below, sec. 93.

bilitics as beings—present themselves as similar in that each tiling manifests a unique proportion to its act of existing, and vice versa.

This intelligible similarity (likeness) in being is not univocation, as we have already seen; nor can it be reduced to a combination of univocation and equivocation, as it would be if the *esse* were exactly the same in each existent and the thing-element simply diverse. For any given act of existing is the act of existing of *some* tiling; it is, therefore, itself particular, different from any other act of existing. Beings as wholes are similar, not by having *like* parts (that would be univocation) but by having similar relationships of simply diverse parts. The similarity between any two individual existents is precisely a similarity between unique proportions (relationships). This kind of similarity and community is called the “analog}’ of proportionality.” “Analogy” is a technical term for a similarity that cannot be reduced to a combination of identity and difference. “Proportionality” is a technical term for relationships with paired terms.⁷ Since tilings *are* thus really similar or analogous, it is necessary that our knowledge and predication of *being*, also be analogous. In other words, both the noun “being” and the verb “is” can be rightfully used in our knowledge and speech only as analogous. The diversity of existents as beings prevents the univocal predication of being.

We are here dealing with being in its primary meaning, as the real order presents it to us. We are speaking of the intelligible similarity found between one existent whole formally understood as a being and any other existent whole understood in the same way. The analog}’ of being is therefore primarily and basically an analog}’ between *beings*—between any two or more real things having their own act of existing.

Later on, we shall see that there are relationships and analogies within beings, that is, between the various principles of being.

⁷Proportionality and proportion are mentioned in Selected Passages, No. 9.

We shall also discover another kind of analog}' (causal analogy) between some effects and their causes, and a still different kind of analogy between God and all other beings.⁸

Hence, not all analogy is analogy of proportionality. Nor is every relationship of paired terms analogous. For example, consider a mathematical series like 2/4:3/6:4/8:5/10, where the relation (double) is univocal. It is true that here the parts are diverse; but there can be an identical (univocal) relationship between them, because we are dealing with simple abstract objects. Once abstracted from *esse*, singularity, and intrinsic differences, objects as known can literally possess formally the same intrinsic perfections? But when we are dealing with the relationships involved in being, univocation is impossible.

In summary, then, *being* is analogous. It cannot be applied to any two beings with exactly the same meaning. It is not a univocal intelligibility, for every being is unique and particular. Being is not obtained by any kind of abstraction, properly so called. On the other hand, the term "being" is not equivocal. One being is simply diverse from any and every other being, but it is also similar to any and every other being of our experience by a similarity of proportions. Between any two or more beings as we find them we discover a similarity of intrinsic proportions between what-it-is and its *esse*. *Being* is therefore analogous by an analogy of proper proportionality.

•See below, secs. 31, 32, 49.

At this point it is traditional to treat of metaphor, and it is frequently said that metaphor is "the analogy of extrinsic proportionality." Thomists point to texts like *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 13, art. 6. It should be noted that *metaphora* is a Greek term, translated into Latin as *translatio*, and means nothing more than "figure of speech" (as a proof of this, note that St. Thomas instances causal attribution as well as what is commonly recognized as metaphor in the passage cited). At the first level of analysis, metaphor is the extrinsic attribution of an alien nature; see Robert R. Boyle, S.J., "The Nature of Metaphor," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXXI (1954), 267-230. For a suggestion about an underlying analogy in metaphor, see below, Chap. IX, secs. 63, 67.

* For the reason why this is true, see below, Chap. V, n. 12.

21. Definitions

A *univocal* term (and knowledge) is one that is applied to many individuals in wholly the same sense.

An *equivocal* term is a term that has the same external sign (same in sound or spelling) but entirely different meanings.

An *analogous* term (and knowledge) is one whose meaning is not exactly the same; nor is it entirely different; it is not merely a combination of a univocal and an equivocal element but that which is the same is somehow also different.

Analogy of proportionality is a similarity of relationships of diverse parts, principles, and so forth.

An analogue, or analogate, is one of the things, terms, principles, and so forth, to which an analogous term is applied or of which an analogous knowledge is true.

22. Summary

A. *Only individuals exist.*

Nonindividuals are either formal universals or absolute natures (simple, or direct, universals).

But: neither formal universals nor absolute natures exist (a) because formal universals must be *one* in order to be what they are, and that which is one is not-many and therefore not-common, yet an existing formal universal should also be common to many; and (b) because absolute natures, which *can* be either singular or universal, cannot simultaneously be fully actual. Absolute natures cannot exist as such in singulars, because a real thing cannot be composed of elements each of which is indifferent to reality.

Therefore: no nonindividuals exist, or only individuals exist

B. *Being is not a universal.*

A universal is an abstract and univocal term.

But: being is not abstract, for it includes the whole real thing; nor is it univocal, for it includes all real differences.

CHAPTER IV

Becoming—Change—Motion

24. The problem of change

We have just engaged in a detailed consideration of the fact that things are. That things change is a fact which is also directly known, and the investigation of what change is will occupy us for the next three chapters. Some philosophers have found difficulty in admitting both being and change at one and the same time. Some of the essentialists, in defining reality as that-which-is-whal-it-is, have combined permanence with this self-identity so much so that they consider the changing to be unreal. Some have even gone so far as to assert that all change is an illusion. We can take as a simple example of this kind of position the argument of Parmenides, an Italo-Greek who flourished in the early fifth century before Christ. According to this Greek philosopher, the real or being is that-which-is-what-it-is. If the real were to change, it would have to be what-it-is (by definition) and at the same time what-it-is-not (on the supposition that it changes). But this consequence is a contradiction, and so the supposition is false. Again, we can consider this position from another point of view. To change is to become other than what one was. Now, the real is what-it-is, and that which is other than (or opposite to) the real is notliing. So, change would be possible only if the opposite of the real were also real; but this is false, and so change is impossible. This is a very simple position, but more elaborate forms of it have been held at various times.

The position which Parmenides was criticizing was that of Heraclitus, an Ionian Greek of about the end of the sixth century B.c. He was impressed by the unity of the universe and by its

ceaseless activity and change. It seemed to him that *if* change is real, then everything which is real is change. And so Heraclitus not only asserted that change is real, he denied that anything is permanent in being. Everything is in flux, in process; he found the best example of his notion in the restless, ever changing fire. An elaborated form of this opinion has been held at various times and is relatively popular at the present time. Many modern philosophers express their notion of it by saying that there is no substance, no *thin''* which acts; there is only activity without an agent. They deny the reality of the things and persons which we immediately perceive, not because their perception is any different than ours but because they cannot see how they can admit the reality of both change and being.

Are we really forced to choose between change and being? It is easy to see that those who chose being and denied change did so because for them "to be" was "to lie an essence"; to lie real was to be *what* a thing is. But the strange thing is the same faulty understanding of being led others to the opposite position of denying being in favor of change. Accepting the notion that "to be" is "to be unchangeably and permanently what a thing is," they have also accepted the immediate evidence that the things of our experience are in constant, more or less perceptible change. Because they are empiricists, they prefer facts to theories. In their minds, the fact is that change is going on; the theory is the notion of being as "that which remains what it is." Rightly questioning this notion of being, they have failed to ask a more fundamental question: "What is it to be real?"

Hence, since we have seen that to be is to exercise an act of existing, and since we have direct and undeniable evidence that change is going on, it is necessary to ask whether change is incompatible with being when being is understood as that-which-is.

By change, we understand "becoming different." We must therefore investigate what is meant by "sameness" and "difference."

25. Identity, distinction, and difference

Identity is sameness, oneness of a thing with itself. We say that a thing is identical with itself when it is the same at two points of time, or under several considerations, and so forth. Identity is absolute when all the characteristics, traits, and so forth of a thing are the same. Identity is partial, limited, or qualified, if some of the characteristics, traits, and so forth are the same, and others are not the same. Several types of limited identity may be pointed out as examples. Numerical identity is the basic sameness of one and the same individual along with various minor changes; we speak, for example, of the numerical (personal) identity of one and the same person throughout his life. We speak of specific identity when we have two individuals which belong to exactly the same *kind* of reality; for example, in geometry we speak of identical triangles. We speak of the material or real identity of a thing which we are thinking of in several ways; for example, John Doe as father of a family is materially identical with the same John Doe as a business man, but he is being considered now with one set of relations, now with another.

Distinction is lack of identity. It always implies plurality and division of some sort or other, for wherever there is a distinction, there must be more than one thing or part or aspect. Distinctions are basically of two types: real and of reason. A real distinction is found wherever there are really several things, parts, elements, and the like, independently of any act of the mind. A real distinction and a real identity are opposed as contradictories: that is, a real identity denies a real distinction, and vice versa. A common sign of a real distinction is separability: wherever two things or parts can be separated, such that one can exist without the other, those things or parts are really distinct. But not every real distinction implies the separability of those things or parts which are distinct. When the distinction is between complete things or beings, we speak of a real major distinction. When the distinction is between the parts (elements, principles) of one thing, we call

it a real minor distinction (for example, the distinction between a man's hand and his foot; or the distinction between his color and his shape).

A distinction of reason is not a distinction within the thing itself but a lack of identity between two ways of understanding one and the same real thing. A typical example of the distinction of reason can be found in the parts of a definition: "rational animal," which is the essential definition of man, is composed of two parts. What we understand when we say "animal" is different from what we understand when we say "rational"; but the tiling we understand in these two incomplete ways is one and the same. When at least one of the two concepts (between which there is a distinction of reason) does not imply the other, the distinction of reason is a major one. For example, though "rational" does imply "animal," yet "animal" does not imply "rational," and this we can find as well from an inspection of these two concepts as from the fact that there are animals which are not rational. On the other hand, when both concepts imply each other, we speak of a minor distinction of reason; an example of such a distinction we will find later on is the distinction between "one" and "being."

Difference can mean the same as distinction in some of its uses, but often the term "difference" is used to express the reason for a distinction. In our usage, the term "distinction" will more commonly be used to indicate that one thing (part, element) is not another; the term "difference" will be used to indicate the way in which things differ or, sometimes, that by which things differ. Of the differences between tilings two will be mentioned frequently in the material which will be considered next. A "numerical difference" is that between two individuals which belong to the same species or kind; for example, there is a numerical difference between Peter and Paul, between two shepherd dogs, two trees, two chairs. An "essential difference" is the difference between two things, which, in addition to being individually different, also are of different kinds or species. In logic, we learn that a defini-

Hon is composed of a genus and a difference and that things are said to be specifically different when, having a common genus, each has some attribute proper to itself by which it differs from the others (this proper attribute is called the "difference"). But in logic any common notion suffices for a genus, and any less common one for a difference. In metaphysics and the philosophy of nature we do not work with such arbitrary classifications. Rather, we try to determine as accurately as possible *what* things are according to their intrinsic constituents. When this has been done, and we find that the intrinsic constituents of one are different from those of another thing, then we say that the things differ essentially.

Now, it is obvious from our own past experience that we cannot simply look at a thing and know at once, immediately, what it essentially is. We have to learn what things are, and we discover this by seeing directly what they do. Thus, we often cannot tell by looking at a thing whether it is alive or dead. But we watch it act, and so we learn what it is. Briefly, we learn the essence or specific nature of a thing from its activities or operations. This must also be the method by which we discover specific or essential differences. Two things are discovered to be essentially different if one of them has some operations which the other does not have. Thus, living things have some activities (nutrition, growth, reproduction) which other material things simply do not have. Hence, living things are essentially different from non-living things.

26. A changing thing has really distinct components

We began this chapter with a problem urged by many philosophers that there is some kind of incompatibility between being and change. For clarity's sake, we decided to obtain a clear understanding of the terms involved in considering change. We saw that change means "to become other than something was." s So we undertook an examination of difference, distinction, and identity. Now we are ready to look at change as it actually hap-

pens, and our purpose is ultimately to discover the relation between change and being. In order to keep our discussion concrete and in touch with reality, we shall use as an example the change of a seed into a tree.

What do we mean when we say that a seed changes into a tree? We mean that there was first an initial stage in which there was a seed with a definite size, shape, and structure; secondly that there was some kind of process; and thirdly that there is a terminal stage at which the process arrives, in which the tree has a quite different size, shape, and structure.¹ (Note that the initial and terminal stages are not absolutely initial and terminal but are such relatively to each other and the process.) Moreover, there must be some continuity between initial stage, process, and terminal stage. If, after the seed was planted, some one came, replaced the seed with a seedling, then with a very small tree, then with a larger tree, and finally with a very large one, we would not have an instance of real change in one and the same tree (but an illusion of change if we did not know the difference, and a mere succession of different things if we did).

Let us examine this analysis more closely. For something to change is for it to *become* other than it was. To become is to come-to-be; in other words, becoming is a process which terminates in being. Because there must be a continuity throughout the process, and because the differences of initial and terminal stages cannot ground that continuity², there must be something common, namely, a subject which undergoes that process.² For convenience and brevity, we will make some use of the following symbols:

XY—the initial stage, the subject with its characteristics as it is before the change takes place.

XZ—the terminal stage, the subject with the characteristics it has after the change.

P—the process itself.

X—the common subject, the thing which changes.

¹ For the relation of succession to change, see Selected Passages, No. 11.

² On the common subject in change, see Selected Passages, No. 10.

X is therefore both XY and XZ ; but this is not a contradiction. Before X changes, it *can* be what it will be after the change is completed. Hence, at the point at which X is XY , X is said to be *in potency* to XZ . After the process, when X has become XZ , it actually has the trait, characteristic, or perfection to which the process was originally directed. Hence, after the change, X is now Z *in act*? We can summarize this by saying, "X is both XY and XZ ; when X is XY in act, it is in potency to XZ ; when it is XZ in act, it is no longer in potency to XZ ; if the process is reversible, when X is XZ in act, it is in potency to XY ." For example, when a thing is hot in act, it is in potency to being cold; when it is cold in act, it is in potency to being hot. This distinction between "being in potency" and "being in act" enables us to see that change and being are not mutually exclusive as Heraclitus and Parmenides thought. This distinction, moreover, gives us a new way to define change: for a thing to change is for it to become in act what it was in potency.

The analysis of change can be pushed still further, by investigating the nature of that which changes. We have seen that, first of all, a real change involves a subject which is present throughout the change; and this subject we have designated X. Secondly, after a process of real change, the thing which changed is different— XZ is different from XY . The subject of change must have either acquired something which it did not have in act before or lost something which it had in act or lost one characteristic and acquired another. Schematically:

$$XY \text{-----} \underset{j}{\text{---}} P \text{-----} > XZ$$

• Note that we are here dealing with two conditions of a being: "to be in potency," and "to be in act." These two conditions are related to, but by no means identical with, the principles of potency and act which will be studied in Chap. VI. To discover the principles of act and potency is much more difficult than the analysis which is being made here. Moreover, an attempt to pass from the present consideration to the principles of act and potency will result in univocal concepts of act and potency—a consequence that will vitiate the whole understanding of metaphysics.

To show more clearly how the common subject continues throughout the change, we can diagram it thus:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} Y. & & Z. \\ X & P & \rightarrow X \end{array}$$

To illustrate the three ways in which change can occur (to gain, to lose, to gain one and lose another), we can make our scheme more detailed, using *a* for a positive initial perfection, *b* for a positive terminal perfection, and *c* for the common subject:

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} \text{not-}f & r, & b & a & T, & \text{not-}a & a_{--} \quad - \quad b_{-} \\ c & l & c & c & \text{---} & \text{---} & c \quad \quad \quad c \end{array}$$

Can tile one or the two positive perfections which are gained or lost or interchanged be identical really with the common subject which changes? Can either *a* or *b* be identical with *c*? Clearly, these three components cannot be really identical. If we suppose they are really identical, then either there is nothing really common—and so there is no change, but removal of one thing and the substitution of another whole thing (Heraclitus)—or there is nothing really gained or lost, if we choose to say that the common element which is identical with all its stages is the real thing (Parmenides). Therefore, in a real change, at least one of the terms of the change must be composed of two really distinct components.

There are various types of components in a whole being. The term, “part” (although it sometimes is used to mean “any component or constituent”) most often means “an equal constituent portion,” and in this usual sense it is equivalent to an “integral part.” Examples of integral parts are the parts of a human body, the parts into which a line can be divided. Integral parts usually are quantitative parts of an extended (and measurable) whole. There are other types of components which are not quantitative in character, which cannot be discovered by direct sense experience, and which are not capable of existing as distinct beings

after the division of the whole. Such components we will call “principles,” that is, intrinsic or constituent principles.

In a real change, the components must be really distinct; a distinction of reason cannot account for a real change. If the being which changes is one being, then the component principles will be distinct with a real minor distinction.

Now that we have developed, through an instance of real change, a pattern by which we can understand how change occurs, we are ready, in the following chapter, to look at various kinds of change.

27. Definitions

Change is the process of becoming different or other than something was. (This term stresses the difference between initial and terminal stages.)

Becoming is the transition or process from being in potency to being in act. (This is the technical, scientific definition; the term, “becoming,” stresses the relation of process to being.)

Motion in the strict sense (local motion) is change of place or position.

Motion in the wide sense is any change which can be directly measured by time, any change which is continuous or gradual in character.

Motion in the widest (or transferred sense) is any change.

Identity is the sameness of a thing with itself.

Distinction is lack of identity.

Real distinction is a lack of identity independent of any act of the mind.

Distinction of reason is a lack of identity dependent upon an act of the mind.

Being in act is the condition of really possessing some perfection or modification.

Being in potency is the condition of not really having, but being able to acquire, some perfection.

28. Summary

A. *Change and being are not incompatible.*

Change involves an initial stage, an intermediate process, and a terminal stage. The subject of the change at the beginning is in potency to the determinations which it will have in act at the end.

Hence, change and being are not mutually exclusive or completely incompatible; rather, because change is directed toward being in act, it implies being. Yet, they are not identical either but are related as process and term of the process, as motion and the point of arrival of the motion.

B. *Things which change are composite.*

Whatever undergoes a real, intrinsic change must be different in its terminal stage from what it was in the initial stage, and yet there must also be a common subject.

But: that by which the initial stage differs from the terminal stage cannot be really identical with the common subject (and this subject is necessary for the continuity of the two terms).

Therefore: that which changes must be composed of a common principle which is in potency and (at least in one of the stages) a principle by which the stages differ.

29. Readings

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. IV, chaps. 5, 6 (1010a15 ff. 1011b34), Bk. VIII, chap. 1 (1042a32); *Physics*, Bk. I, chaps. 7-9 (190a32-192b2), on change; Bk. III, chaps. 1-3 (200b.12-202b29), on motion.

Jacques Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. E. I. Watkin (New York, Sheed and Ward. 1933), pp. 50-51, 60-63, 239-246.

John Wild, *Introduction to Realistic Philosophy* (New York, Harper, 1948), pp. 277-295, on change.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

10. *A Common Subject in Change*

Because every change is from one contrary to another, it is necessary that a subject underlie them, which subject can be changed from con-

trary to contrary. This the Philosopher proves in two ways. First, because one contrary does not change into another: for blackness itself does not become whiteness. Therefore, if there is to be a change from black to white, there must be something besides blackness which can become white.

The same thing he proves in another way, from this consideration that in every change something remains. For example, in a change from black to white a body remains, but the other thing, namely, one of the contraries—black, for example—does not remain.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. XII, lect.
2 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 2429-
2430).*

Everything which is changed remains with regard to some element of it and with regard to some other element ceases to be. For example, that which is changed from whiteness to blackness remains with regard to its substance. Thus, in everything which is changed, some composition is to be found.

*Summa Theologiae, Pt. I, q. 9,
art. 1.*

11. *Change Implies Succession*

Since every change has two terms which cannot be together . . . in every change or motion there must be succession, for this reason that two terms cannot be together. Hence, there must also be time, which is the measure of that which is before and after, and this, latter is the essential note of succession. But succession occurs differently in different cases. For sometimes the end of the motion is remote from its beginning. Between beginning and end there may be the medium of dimensive quantity, as in the local motion of bodies, or in the motion of growth and shrinking. There may be the medium of virtual quantity, whose division is related to the intensity and remission of some form, as in the alteration of sensible qualities. In both of these cases, time directly measures the motion itself, because there is a successive progress to the term, for it is divisible.

Sometimes, however, the term of the change is not remote from the beginning, as in those changes which are from a privation to a form or vice versa, as in generation and corruption, and illumination, and all things of a like nature. Even in these changes, time is involved, since it is evident that matter is not simultaneously under a form and the privation of that form, nor is the air at once subject to darkness and light. However, time is not involved, in the sense that the going forth or passage from one extreme to the other takes place in time. But to one of the extremes (that one, namely, which is first lost in the

change) there is joined a motion or alteration (as in generation and corruption), or the local motion of the sun (as in illumination), and at the term of that motion there is also the term of the change. Yet that change is said to be sudden, or in an instant, for this reason that in the last instant of the time which measured the preceding motion, there is acquired that form or privation of which formerly nothing was present. And in that instant we say that something has been generated, but not properly that it is being generated. . . . Consequently, all such instantaneous changes are the terms of some motion.

*Commentary on the First Book
of the Sentences, dis. 37, q. 4,
art. 3.*

CHAPTER V

The Intrinsic Principles of Change and Being: I. In Particular

30. Accidental change and the substance-accident composition of being

We must now take up the study of change more in particular. The first thing that we will need to reflect on is that there are different kinds of change, at least descriptively speaking. For example, there is the kind of change that is typified by the various changes that one and the same person goes through in the course of his life. There are changes in size, in bodily appearance, in knowledge and character acquired, in activity, in relations with others. Then there is another type of change most strikingly exemplified in the death of living tilings; a dead dog, for example, is just not a dog any more.

Our present consideration will concern the former type of change, and we will begin with a number of examples. A piece of wax is at one time in the shape of a candle; at another time it may be globular or a lump of irregular shape. A baby frog has no legs, a full-grown frog has legs and has lost its tail. A scraggly tree may be trimmed into a regular shape. Birds fly from one tree to another. Some things change in size, particularly living tilings; a giant redwood, hundreds of feet tall and with a trunk many feet in diameter, was once a little seed. Some things change in activity; trees grow during spring and summer, and show no signs of such activity during winter; animals sleep, run, eat, and some hibernate during the winter months; men also

change activities in much the same way as other animals (eating, sleeping, moving about), and they also change in their thoughts and desires, they grow in knowledge and acquire virtues or vices.

Now, each one of these beings undergoes a real change; the changes we have been speaking of are not like the changes of clothes on a show-window dummy; they are changes within being. The being, considered as a whole, is different after the change from what it was before. Yet there is also in some way an identity. The wax that changes its shape is the same wax; the frog or tree that grows is the same frog or tree; the adult, mature man is the same human person that he was as a baby, a child, a young man. We know this because the changed thing does basically the same *kind* of activity before the change as after. We know what kind of thing a being is by seeing what kind of activities it has. We can sum up all these examples this way: in the kind of changes described above, the being that changes is the same *kind* of thing that it was before the change, and it is the same individual. In other words, there is a subject that at one time existed under one modification and then later on under another.

In the preceding chapter, we saw that there must be a real ? distinction between the subject of the change, the common element, and the determinations or qualifications which are gained or lost. But the components of a changing thing are not themselves whole beings but principles or parts. Hence, the distinction between these components is a real minor distinction.

What can we say about these various components and their relations to each other? In the kind of change we are considering here, the subject remains what it was, in the sense that it retains the same nature and individuality. But in itself, this subject can, and often must, receive further determinations; for example, the wax must have *some* shape, but it need not have any particular shape in order to be wax. Because this subject "is under" ("substands") the various determinations or modifications, it is called a "substance." Thirdly, though a substance can receive further

determinations, the substances which change in our experience themselves exist or are in their own right, in themselves.

On the other hand, the various modifications come and go; we speak of them as "coming to" or "happening to" a substance; hence they are called "accidents"† (*ac-cidens*, "that which happens to"). The function of an accident is to modify or determine a substance.

Both substance and accident are principles of being. But they are not equal principles; they are not exactly of the same kind. Substance is that in a being *by* which the being remains of the same kind throughout an accidental change and by which the being has an act of existing in itself. Accident is that in a being *by* which the substance is modified in some definite way; the nature of accident is to be the modification of a substance (its subject), and in this sense to be "in" the substance. Hence, philosophers often say that accidents *inhere* in substance. Substance and accident will be considered in detail in Chapters XI-XIII.

31. Substance and accident as beings by analogy

We have seen that the properly real thing, or the being, is the entire thing-which-is. We have also seen that the first components or principles of being discovered are substance and accident. In our analysis of accidental change we saw that the principles of being cannot themselves be beings in the same way—it would be impossible that a principle of being should itself be *something which is*. Nevertheless, if substance and accident are the principles of the real, they must also be real themselves, since the real is not made up of unrealities. How then can substance and accident be real? In the sense that they are constitutive principles of that-which-is. Since substance is the (more or less) permanent

† The term "accident" is also used in a logical sense, and in logic it means "that which is not necessarily connected with the essence of some thing." It is also used in a popular sense, "something (usually something harmful), which was unforeseen, unintended, and so on." We can call the meaning of *accident* used in the body of the text the "metaphysical accident."

nature of the thing and is that in the thing by which an existent has *esse* in itself, the act of existing pertains, within the being, most closely to substance. In other words, substance is not a being all by itself; but the *esse* of the whole being is also the *esse* of all the principles of that being, not equally but in proportion to the way in which the principles constitute that being. Now, substance is the constitutive nature of that-which-is, and so we can properly and directly say that a substance exists. Substance, therefore, is directly proportioned to the act of existing; we can say directly and without any qualification, "A man, a cat, a dog, a tiger exists."

Accident, on the other hand, is related to that-which-is, not of itself but through substance. The nature of an accident is to modify the substance in which it is. In other words, accident, according to its nature, is not in itself but in another.² Since accident naturally depends on substance for its being, we can say that accidents *are*, not directly but by inherence. For example, we can say, "Whiteness exists—in white things." Here we have an analogy of the constitutive principles of being, based on the relationship of these principles to each other and to the whole which they constitute. These relationships make it possible for us, more or less properly, to call both substance and accidents beings,³ and so we call this analogy the "analog}' of proportion (by inherence)." Briefly, substance is being by its direct proportion to the act of existing of the whole, since it is that in the being *by which* the being has an act of existing *in itself*. Accident is being by its proportion to substance in which it inheres, for when an accident modifies the substance of a being, the *whole* being *exists*, *by* that accident, *in a modified way*. For a concrete example, when we say, "A dog is," we mean, "Some individual existent is, having the nature of a dog as the principle by which it has *esse*-in-itself." When we say, "Whiteness is," we mean, "Some individual existent

² See below, Chap. XII, especially secs. 88 and 90.

³ See also, Selected Passages, No. 13. For the relation between the analogy of proportion and the analogy of proportionality, see below, sec. 108.

is, having in itself as one of its modifying principles the quality of whiteness," or, more simply, "Whiteness does truly modify the substance of some being," "Whiteness truly inheres in the substance of some being."

32. Substantial change and the matter-form
composition of substance

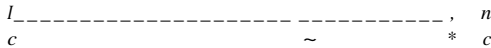
In the discussion of accidental change, we considered those changes in which the changing being remained the same kind of thing and the same individual that it was. However, there are also other changes in which the thing after the change is of a different nature than the thing before the change. The clearest examples of essential change can be found in the death of living things. A live animal has a certain nature, which is shown by the fact that it can perform certain kinds of activities. When the animal dies, the dead body of the animal is simply incapable of vital activities, and so is essentially or specifically different from the living thing. A very similar example can be found in the nourishment of living things. In nourishment, some nonliving material is changed into and becomes a part of a single living thing. In this case, two beings of different kinds become one being.

Our experience shows us that there are some accidental changes which prepare for and are the means of bringing about the change of nature. And there are still other accidental changes which are necessarily consequent upon the specific change. To illustrate this from the examples given above, we know that whether death is violent or natural, in either case some dispositions or qualities are changed by force or disease or simply by the wearing out of the organism. And we know also that properties of a nature are necessarily connected with the nature, so that when the first nature is present, these properties are present, and they go with the nature, while the new nature which is the term of the change brings with it its own properties. But over and above these accidental changes, there is a change of the

nature itself, which is made known to us from the kinds of activities that the two beings in question perform.⁴ Hence, there is a change in the very substance of the thing changing.

By applying our analysis of change to these changes of substance from living to nonliving, we get the diagram:

(1) Living substance — changes to-----> nonliving substance



(2) Living 4- nonliving — change to-----» one living substance

Hence, all substances which undergo substantial change are composed of two intrinsic principles. One of these principles is that by which a substance is of a definite kind: living, nonliving, and so forth. This principle has received the name of “substantial form”—*substantial*, because it is the determining principle of substance; *form*, because it has the same relation to its coprinciple as shape or structure has to the materials used. Substantial form is the principle *by which* a substance is the kind of substance it is; therefore, it is not itself a substance, much less a being, and so it is not a reality which we could possibly find in our direct sense experience or by any instrument. Note that in metaphysics we deal only with substantial form as a principle of substance and being without qualification; in the philosophy of nature we shall discover that there are different kinds of substantial form and that one kind of form (the human soul) is not only a substantial form but also a principle of operation and of being.

The second of the two coprinciples of substantial change and composition cannot of itself have any particular nature, since it is precisely the common element in the change of nature or kind. It is of itself merely a subject of change, and for this reason it is

⁴To establish this fact we are using knowledge at the subscientific level. In the philosophy of nature, substantial or specific changes and specific differences are considered and proved at the level of demonstrative knowledge.

called "primary matter" or "first matter." It is called primary matter because it is the first principle of the most basic type of change and is determinable to any nature which material things can have. Since substantial form is not a thing or a being or a substance properly so called, much less is primary matter a thing or a being. Of itself, primary matter is not actually any kind of thing; nor does it have quantity or any kind of qualities or other accidents. Hence, primary matter cannot exist in itself; it cannot be found as such in direct or indirect sense experience; it cannot even be understood separately from substance or substantial form. It is an intelligible coprinciple and so is real as a principle of substance and can be understood only in the same way.⁵

Are primary matter and substantial form really distinct? Since the changes which are explained by these coprinciples are real changes, matter and form must be distinct with a real minor distinction. In a way, matter and form are like substance and accident, yet there are also many differences. One of these differences is that accidental change can be gradual because the subject of accidental change (namely, substance itself) is the actual principle by which an individual is in itself. But substantial change must be instantaneous since the subject of substantial change (namely, primary matter) is purely determinable. Substantial changes seem to take time because of the accidental changes which are the means of substantial change.⁶

Another approach to the composition of sensible things is derived from a consideration of the various ways in which accidents are related to their subjects. On the one hand, we find that there are specific qualities and properties which indicate different kinds of things. What one thing is is different from what other things are; what each thing is is characterized by determination, actuality, and some kind of fixity. Hence, substance, which is the

⁵See also, Selected Passages, No. 12.

⁶That continuous change implies primary matter is established by St. Thomas in his *Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics*, Bk. VIII, lect. 1 (cd. Cathala, No. 1686). But this consideration seems to belong to the philosophy of nature rather than to metaphysics.

proper subject of accidents, must itself have these characteristics. On the other hand, we also find that some modifications are common to all material things—chief among them being quantity and the continuous way in which their contingent accidents vary. Thus, we find two sorts of modifications of substance: one characterized by being proper (that is, not common) and relatively fixed, the other by being common and fluid or relatively "formless." But this distinction of accidents cannot be based on a simple, indivisible substance, for a simple subject cannot be the source of contrary dispositions. Hence, material substances are composite, made up of two principles, one of which is determining and specific (substantial form), the other, common to all material things and in itself indeterminate (primary matter).

Primary matter and substantial form are not things or beings; they are not each, properly speaking, a substance. But they are principles of substance; *by them* a substance is respectively capable of substantial change, relatively indeterminate, and like other material substances, and, at the same time, actually of a given kind or species, determinate, and different from other kinds of material things. Hence, these two principles can be called substances—not in the primary sense of that term but by an analogy of proportion, inasmuch as they are proportioned to each other and to the substance which they constitute. They are reducible to the category of substance.

33. Individuals in a species and matter-form composition

So far we have been considering material substances with regard to their real changes and real internal constitution. There is another important consideration of material substances whose point of departure is our knowledge of them.

We have already noted that in material things there are many individuals having one and the same specific nature. When we know the nature of a being, we know it by universal knowledge which is true of all the individuals having that same identical nature. Yet each individual is itself really different from every

other individual. We have already seen, in Chapter III, that the universal as such cannot exist either as a separate being or as a really distinct part of a being. Therefore, in Peter, for example, *man* is not really distinct from *Peter* nor from *Petreity*.

On the other hand, universal knowledge cannot just be a fiction of the human mind.⁷ That which we know in our universal knowledge is somehow found in the real order. Comparing our knowledge to reality we find the situation which can be diagrammed in this way:

The real being, Peter, who	is known	pnan
is individual throughout	by means of	[Petreity]

Therefore, if our knowledge is true, there must be some reason or foundation in tilings for our knowing them universally and particularly, and yet this foundation cannot be a common nature as common really distinguished from particularity.

As metaphysicians our concern is precisely with the structure of the beings that can be known by universal knowledge. Our problem is to determine what ultimately in the constitution of such beings is the basis or foundation of their intelligibility as specifically the same.

Let us turn back to the distinction we have discovered between

⁷ We are here appealing to many evidences for a moderate realism. First of all, we do have true knowledge of a world of sensible beings distinct from ourselves, and we know the existence of these beings by our intellect but through sense perception. This evidence cannot be proved, first, because it is an evidence; secondly, because sense perception is a principle of all our knowledge, as will become clear from the philosophy of human nature.

Secondly, there are many considerations which particularly concern universal knowledge. Pragmatically speaking, universal knowledge can be used as a means to deal with real singulars. More deeply, when we mentally construct fictions we are aware of our activity in that construction and can trace the process, but in knowing singulars by direct universal knowledge we do not find ourselves constructing a fiction. Ultimately, we can see that our universal knowledge is a knowledge of the thing which exists. It is not a complete knowledge but one which abstracts from singularity. However, to abstract is not to deny. It would be false to deny that things are singular; we have a true but incomplete knowledge when we know a singular tiling without knowing its singularity. To develop these brief considerations is the task of an epistemology or theory of knowledge.

primary matter and substantial form. Substantial form is that by which a substance is what-it-is, that is, has such a nature or essence. *Priman'* matter is that by which a thing is capable of substantial change and which therefore is the subject or recipient of substantial form. As such a recipient, primary matter is the ontological ground for the possibility of there being many individuals (for example, many men) in the same species. The individual substantial form that Peter has and the individual form that James has are such that we, by abstraction, can obtain from either one of them a nature of the same intelligible content (man). Individual existents are so structured that this is possible, and so we rightly say that they possess *specifically* the same substantial form. v

Our statement is not, however, sufficiently accurate. There must be many subjects for specifically the same substantial form. How are these subjects distinguished from each other? By the division of *priman'* matter. Now, primary matter cannot be divided in itself, since in itself it is purely indeterminate, and division implies distinction, difference, and so some kind of determination. If we consult experience, we find that an individual is that which is here and now? But, as we shall see later more explicitly, *here* and *now* are functions of quantity. Quantity or extension is such that it has parts outside of parts and of itself is divisible. Hence, primary matter with quantity or dimensions⁹ is

•Of course, individuals frequently differ in many ways. Practically, we can often identify an individual by some quality—"the curly-headed one." But such traits "identify" an individual only within a limited situation; absolutely speaking, we cannot single out any quality of a sensible thing which could not, at least in principle, also be equally present in another. Take, for example, two pins, two crystals, two "identical twins." Tilings can still be two even if these two have no discoverable qualitative differences. Two material beings cannot be two beings unless their temporally determined locations are different. This is not meant to deny "compénétration" or the possibility of a subatomic particle "passing through a solid"; if such events do happen, they are nevertheless explained by means of differences in the "here" and "now."

•At any given moment, the dimensions in question are the actual three dimensions of the particular individual limited by the external surface; these are called "determinate dimensions." But because in some individuals

that which is the principle of individuation¹⁰ of a material thing. There are many individuals in a species inasmuch as the recipients of specifically the same substantial form are divided from each other in relation to tridimensional extension.

It will help us if we compare the order of logical composition (common nature + individuality) with the quite different order of real composition (substantial form + primary matter + quantity).

(1) *In the order of logical composition,*

Peter	James	John
man	man]	man
+	• + r	+
Petreity	Jamesness J	Johnness

(2) *In the order of real composition,¹¹*

Peter	James	John
-------	-------	------

f = substantial form by which each individual is a man.

p = the primary matter.

x, y, z = the diverse quantities.

The subscript letters indicate the determination [designation] of matter by diverse quantities.

(living things) the dimensions change—between limits—during their lives, we must consider their dimensions with their variable limits; these are called "indeterminate dimensions." By indeterminate dimensions we mean the three-dimensional quantity of an individual, with variable limits, as it were, "at the center."

¹⁰The principle of individuation is that in the particular thing by which that thing has its particular part or share of the specific perfection and so is only one of many in the species. Distinguish this term from "individuality." Individuality is the sum total of positive perfections pertaining to this individual as *this* individual. Individuation is the quasi-negative, limiting principle; individuality is the correlative, positive perfection.

¹¹Because the diagram is somewhat complicated, here is how it should be read: "In the real order, Peter, as *this* man, is composed of a substantial form (principle of specific perfection) and of a primary matter distinguished in function of a particular quantity plus the quantity which has the function of designating primary matter as this (principle of individuation).

Once this has been understood, we can easily come to see how new individuals arise by the division of previously existing ones. This is basically the way in which new living beings arise; we can see it most simply in the origin of new unicellular organisms. Many of these organisms are multiplied by simple division (fission); one individual divides into two individuals which are numerically distinct from each other, and yet each of the new individuals has the undivided perfection of the species or kind of living thing. Diagrammatically:

		form_____
form_____	_____	matter,, ¹ + qu ¹
matter,, + quantity		form_____
		matter,, ² + qu ²

From our consideration of individuation, we arrive at a fuller understanding of the relationship between matter and form. Form of itself as form is simply what-it-is; it is the principle of determination, actualization of specific or substantial perfection. But matter, as divided recipient or capacity, is the principle of multiplication and limitation as well as of substantial change. No individual has the full perfection of what-it-is-by-nature (that is, through its form), because each form is concretely limited by the matter in which it is received. For example, no man has the full perfection of the human nature which he possesses through his form (his soul), because each man's soul is concretely limited by the body (in the sense of primary matter) in which that soul is received.¹²

“Some students are bothered by the pseudo problem. What keeps a separated soul from either ballooning up to be a universal or being identified with all other human souls? All existents are singular; if the soul exists after death, it exists as a singular and with the singularity and existence it had before. Along these lines, there are only two reasonable questions that can be asked. (1) How can separated souls, which are singular forms, be known by universal knowledge? (2) In what sense can a separated soul be said to be the “soul of Peter”? The answer to both questions is the same: because each separated soul has been the soul of a given individual and permanently retains a relation to that individual's body.

Other students are confused because it seems to them that geometrical

This relationship of form and matter may perhaps be better understood by a consideration of a kind of being about which various philosophers have spoken, namely, the separated substances, also called "angels," "pure spirits," "pure intelligences," and so forth. There are a number of very subtle and difficult arguments by which the existence of such beings is suggested and proved. Neither the time nor the background is available to us here, so we will speak of such beings hypothetically. If such beings exist, their substance is not composite; they are not substantially determinable and so cannot undergo substantial change.¹³ Furthermore, their substance is entirely determinate; they are entirely what they are. There is nothing else in their substance except their specific perfection. Hence this substance is entirely expressed in a single individual, and consequently there cannot be many of these beings in a single species. Each one differs specifically from every other (and so in a kind of way also "numerically"). Because they are pure forms, the formal perfection of such beings is incapable of multiplication; by a somewhat improper use of language, we could say that each individual pure form is its own species (for there are really no species among such beings).

34. That-which-is and the act of existing (*esse*)

So far we have found composition and distinction of principles at the level of accident and activity and at the level of substance. Because we can know *what* is by simple apprehension (concept), but whether a thing is only in a judgment (affirmation or negation), we are led to inquire into the relations between what is and its act of existing (*esse*). It is quite clear that the questions,

figures, though pure forms (abstract, it is true, instead of real), are multiplied by themselves without composition. Careful reflection will show that such abstract forms are not multiplied by themselves *qua* forms, but by "intelligible matter." In simpler terms, such abstract forms are multiplied positionally» that is, by reference to a hypostasized extension which serves as a receptive background. This substantialized quantity is quality-less, and therefore individuates only numerically, i.e., without other distinctions.

“ See also, Selected Passages, No. 14.

"What is it?" and, "Is it?" are two quite different questions. It is also clear that as far as all the things in our direct experience are concerned, the act of existing is not a specific perfection, not a further determination of what the thing is. As Kant said, a hundred real dollars are not a penny more than a hundred possible dollars.

If we attentively reflect upon an existent as it is given to us in immediate experience, we see first of all that the meanings of *to be* and *what-is* are different. As we progressively understand this difference between what-is and its act of existing, we form the primitive understanding of being, "some (sensible) tiling which is"; then, on the level of the scientific knowledge of metaphysics, we are led to make the judgment of separation, and so come to understand being as *that-which-is*. Now, however, we need to study being still more closely.

Let us consider a being, for example, a person, present to us in immediate experience. What that person is (namely, this human being with all his accidental modifications) can be grasped in a series of concepts and is analyzable into the principles of matter and form, substance and accident. These principles are principles of an existent, but they function as principles which constitute the essence.¹⁴ These are the principles by which the being is what-it-is, is limited, is capable of change in various ways. But a being must *be* before¹⁵ it is determined, limited, modified, capable of changes. What makes a thing to *be*?

"On essence, see sec. 12, n. 24. Historically, the term "essence" is used in the strict sense to mean "the specific constitution of a tiling." In this sense, *essence* is that "part" or "aspect" of the substance of a thing which constitutes it in its species. In the secondary sense, we can speak of the essence of an accident as "that specific intelligibility of the accident according to its kind, abstracting from its individual and contingent circumstances."

In a wide sense, the term "essence" has been used to mean "what a thing is." In this sense, we can speak of an individual essence. Nevertheless, in the direct phenomenological analysis of concrete being, we first find *essence* in the wide sense, as the *thing-principle* of that-which-is.

"Before," in this sentence, does not mean a priority of time, but a priority of nature and intelligibility. In other words, determinations and so on presuppose an existent and depend on the act of existing of the existent in order to be real.

Precisely, the act of existing (*esse*). Thus, by direct inspection of an existent we can see that essence and the act of existing are really distinct. These principles, of course, are not spatial or integral parts (like the trunk and members of a living body) nor essential parts (like matter and form). They are purely intelligible principles, not observable as distinct but understood to be distinct with a real minor distinction.

Indirectly, we can help ourselves to see this by two considerations. The first of these begins with the evident fact that the beings of our immediate experience are many and different. Each one is some kind of being; each one has an act of existing limited to a particular nature. If the act of existing were identical with one nature, if, for example, the act of existing were identical with what-it-is-to-be-horse, then, to exist would be to-be-a-horse, and no other kind of thing could exist. But the consequent is not true, and so the antecedent is false. Again, the act of existing is found in many things, each of which as an individual is really different from the others and none of which is simply and purely an act of existing. But just as a substantial form cannot be multiplied or limited of itself, so neither can the act of existing be limited of itself nor multiplied of itself. Hence, unless there were a distinct principle by which the act of existing is limited and multiplied and in which that act is received, there could not be many beings.¹⁶

The second consideration is the fact of change, particularly of substantial change.¹⁷ We experience a thing coming to be

¹⁶Tin's point is explained more fully in *Selected Passages*, Nos. 1.5-16.

¹⁷There are some philosophers, and even some Thomists, who think that this proof is inadequate. They hold that (*a*) an explanation of change can be given by means of the principles of substance and accident, matter and form; (*b*) that the composition of these two principles is a sufficient basis for the proof of the existence of God. Both of these statements are true enough. One can give some explanation of change without going into the question of the distinction between essence and *esse*. But if one remains entirely on that plane, one is reasoning within the philosophy of nature, and therefore should not expect to find anything about being as the metaphysician considers being. The distinction between essence and *esse* is implied in any metaphysical solution of the problem of change. If this

and ceasing to be. But neither essence nor form (which is the determining principle of essence) can change—*horse* cannot become cow or carrion. A horse can die; but what-it-is-to-be-horse cannot die or change in any way in itself. The unchangeableness of an essence is simply a particular expression of the principle of contradiction: "horse is horse and cannot be not-horse." If what-a-thing-is and its act of existing were really identical, then the horse-which-is would exist as necessarily as horse-is-horse. But living things do die; things do change. Hence, what-a-thing-is and its act of existing are distinct, with a real minor distinction.

Hence, what-a-thing-is and its act of existing are two really distinct principles of a being. What-something-is, because it is immediately related to *esse* (the act of existing), is often called essence.¹⁸ Sometimes also that principle is called quiddity (from the Latin *quid*, meaning "what").¹⁹

35. The distinction between power and activity

We have just seen that the variations and changes in the activity of living things are possible only if there is a real minor distinction between the substance which continues to be and the accidental variations which come and go. The relation of activity to substance requires a little more investigation.²⁰ We will be

distinction remains only implicit (as it did in Aristotle), the solution is good as far as it goes, but it is incomplete. If, however, essence and *esse* are thought to be identical in the real order, then each one of the components of a tiling, such as substance and accident, which are essences, must be identically also acts of existing. But that which is its act of existing cannot lose it. All that could happen would be to move the necessarily existing components around, and such an interpretation of change is the denial of all *intrinsic* change. But intrinsic change evidently happens, and therefore essence and the act of existing cannot be identical in the real order.

If "Essence" implies that we are considering what a tiling is as a principle of its being. "Quiddity" implies rather an absolute consideration of what it is, as a pure intelligibility. Strictly speaking, therefore, metaphysics is interested in essences but not in quiddities.

"See also, Selected Passages, No. 17.

"How we distinguish one activity from another and one power of activity from another will be considered in another part of philosophy; cf. G. P. Klubertanz, *Philosophy of Human Nature* (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), pp. 86-102.

unable to complete our consideration of activity from the analysis of experience,² yet we must begin it at this point, first of all, to round out our consideration of the components of being in particular and, secondly, to give us the experiential content so that our later study will not be merely verbal.

Most living things have one or more activities which are sometimes interrupted—by sleep, by climatic changes, by development from immature offspring to senility, and so on. For example, consider the conscious activities of a human being: he has certain kinds of activities like seeing and thinking, and these change from one act to another throughout the waking day; when he is sound asleep, these activities cease altogether. Here, obviously, the activity is distinct from the rest of the being, for it comes and goes and varies, although the being itself continues in existence.

In all the things of experience, we find activity. There is no existent which is absolutely deprived of all action. Even the most passive-looking, apparently inert being is also active, as the investigations of physicists have abundantly proved. Activity is a consequence, an overflowing into the order of action, of the dynamism of the act of existing. What is the relation of activity (action, operation) to the thing which acts? First, a thing acts only if it exists; a nonbeing cannot do anything; a mere concept cannot perform real actions. Secondly, a thing acts according to its nature. In fact, we learn the nature of a thing first and foremost from its activities. Not only is this true in fact; it is necessarily true. For action comes from an agent; it is the fullness, the complement of that agent's being. The substance is that which receives the other accidents and at the same time is the ultimate principle of activity. Now, as we have seen, a substance in our experience is what it is because of its substantial form, and, likewise, the same substantial form specifies the kind of activity

²See below, Chap. VI, sec. 40 (1). As we shall see, the distinction between power and activity is proved partly by means of an a priori analysis.

One important distinction between two kinds of activity, immanent and transient, will be made from the viewpoint of finality; see below, sec. 55.

which a given kind of being has. Hence, activity and nature must necessarily correspond.

We must now raise the question, What is the relation between substance and activity? Does activity immediately inhere in and immediately modify substance in itself, as do other accidents? There is a preliminary and obvious fact that makes us suspect a negative answer, and that is the fact that in material things structure (which is an accidental principle, a quality) is an immediate determinant of activity. But we cannot properly solve this question until we have studied the interrelations of the various principles of being among themselves. Is the power to act just another way of looking at substance? Or is it a really distinct principle? These are the questions with which we conclude our consideration of the constituent principles of being in particular.

36. Definitions

Accident is that principle of being whose nature it is to be in another.

Substance is that principle of being which is modified or determined by accidents (nominal definition).

Substance is that principle of being whose nature it is to be directly ordered to esse in itself (real definition).

Essence in the strict sense is substance considered as being of a certain kind of species and being capable of receiving an act of existing.

Essence in the wide sense is what a thing is. It may include substance and accidents (together as subject of esse); it may be used of principles, of objects of knowledge, of operations, relations, and so forth.

Nature is substance or essence in relation to activities.

Analogy of proportion is that analogy which is based on a single relationship between any two of the analogates; the analogates are not equal (do not have the perfection in an equal degree), but one of them is prior to the other, and this order of priority and posteriority is what makes the realities (and our

knowledge of them) analogous. (The primary analogate has the perfection first and independently, the secondary one, second, and in dependence upon the first. Not every analogy is an analogy of being; there is, for example, also the analogy of substance, as we have seen.)

Analogy of proportion by inherence designates that analogy of proportion by which substance and accident, as unequal constitutive principles of that-which-is are truly but analogously called beings. (Substance is the primary' analogate, since it is the principle *by which* a being *is in itself*; accident is the secondary, dependent analogate, since it is the principle *by which*, through the *modification of substance*, a being is in a modified way.)

Analogy of proportion by information is the analogy by which form and matter, as constitutive principles of substance, can truly but analogously be called substance. (Form is the primary analogate, as the determining principle; matter, the secondary' one, inasmuch as it is proportioned to form and receives its order to being from form.)

Substantial form is the determining and specifying principle of essence or substance.

Primary (first) matter is the determinable and limiting principle of substance in material things and, thereby, is also the common subject of substantial change.²²

Individuation is the limitation of a nature to a particular individual.

Individuality is the sum total of positive perfections, or the fundamental positive perfection, peculiar and proper to some individual.

That-which-is is the principle by which a given thing has its substantial and accidental perfections.

^o Aristotle gives two classic definitions of primary matter. It is "the primary' substratum of each thing, from which it comes to be without qualification, and which persists in the result" (*Physics*, I, 192a31, tr. by Hardie and Gaye), and "By matter I mean that which in itself is neither a particular thing nor of a certain quantity nor assigned to any other of the categories by which being is determined" (*Metaphysics*, Bk. VI, 1029a20, trans. Ross).

Act of existing (or, *esse*) is the principle by which ultimately a thing is or exists.

37. Summary of the argumentation

A. Beings that change accidentally are composed of substance and accidents.

It is a fact of experience that at least some beings change in some characteristics while remaining of the same nature as they were.

But: this change is not possible unless the accidentally changing being is composed of a principle which is of itself and others which are in the former as in a subject.

Therefore: accidentally changing being is composed of substance and accident.

B. Beings that change substantially are composed of primary matter and substantial form.

It is a fact of experience that one kind of thing changes into another.

But: this kind of change implies that each of the beings is composed of a principle by which it is specifically what it is and a principle which is common to both terms and receives the determining principles.

Therefore: things which undergo substantial change are composed of substantial form and primary matter.

C. Individuals in the same species are composed of matter and form.

It is a fact of experience that material tilings belong to a limited number of kinds of things yet differ among themselves.

But: identity and difference in nature cannot flow from one and the same principle but require two distinct principles.

Therefore: individuals in a species are composed of a principle of specific perfection (substantial form) and a principle of individuation (primary matter with quantity).

D. *That-whichds and the act of existing are distinct in all limited beings.*

The beings of our experience manifest themselves as subjects having or exercising an act of existing.

The beings of our experience manifest themselves as many, and as each limited in its being.

But: multiplicity and limitation cannot come from the same principle which constitutes the analogical unity of beings in their being.

Therefore: multiple and limited beings are composed of a principle in virtue of which they are what they are (essence) and a principle by which they are (act of existing, esse).

38. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *On Being and Essence*, trans. Armand Maurer, chap. 2, pp. 30-34 (on essence, matter and form, on essence and individuation); *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 3, art. 2 (no matter and form in God), art. 4 (no distinction of essence and esse in God), art. 6 (no accidents in God), q. 50, art. 2 (angels are pure forms); q. 76, art. 1 (the human soul is the form of a body), art. 2 (and is individuated by the body); *On Spiritual Creatures*, art. 1, ad 9 (individuals in a species), art. 3 (is there a medium which joins form to matter?).

Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers* (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1949), pp. 169-170, 175, 184-185, on essence and the act of existing.

J. Quentin Lauer, S.J., "Determination of Substance by Accidents in the Philosophy of St. Thomas," *The Modern Schoolman*, XVIII (1941), 31-35, on substance and accident.

Jacques Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. E. I. Watkin (New York, Sliced and Ward, 1933), pp. 217-227, 207-210, on substance and accident, matter and form.

Armand Maurer, C.S.B., "Form and Essence in the Philosophy of St. Thomas," *Mediaeval Studies*, XIII (1951), 174-176; form, essence, and the act of existing.

William A. Van Roo, S.J., "Matter as a Principle of Being," *The Modern Schoolman*, XIX (1942), 47-50; the relation of matter to form and to the act of existing.

William M. Walton, "Being, Essence, and Existence," *Review of Metaphysics*, III (1950), 339-365.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

12. *Change, Matter, and Form*

He says that it is necessary to posit matter in sensible substances as substance and subject. For in every change there must be a subject common to the tenor of the change in changes which involve contraries. For example, in change of place there is some common subject, which now is here, and then, there. And in growth, there is a common subject, which now has this quantity, and then a smaller one (if it is a decrease), or a larger one (if there is an increase). And in alteration there is a subject, which now is healthy, and then sick. And since there is also a change in substance (that is, generation and corruption), there must be a common subject, which lies under contrary changes of generation and corruption, and this involves the positing of terms, which are form and privation—in this way, namely, that at one time the matter is in act by the form, and at another time, it is the subject of the privation of that form.

From this reasoning of Aristotle's, it is clear that substantial generation and corruption are the principle of coming to a knowledge of primary matter. For if primary matter of itself had some proper form, by that form it would be something actual. Thus, when some other form were brought about in addition to the former, matter would not simply be by that form, but would become this or that modified being. And thus there would be some kind of generation, but not generation simply. Hence, all those who posited that the first subject was some body—as, air or water—held that generation was the same as alteration.

From this consideration it is clear how we must take the understanding of primary matter, for it is so related to all forms and the privations of them, as an alterable subject is to contrary qualities.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. VIII, lect.
1 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 1688-
1689).*

13. *Substance and Accident as Beings by Analogy*

Those things which have one predicate in common, which is not univocal, but is predicated of them analogously, belong to the consideration of one demonstrative knowledge. But being is predicated in this way of all beings. Therefore, all beings belong to the consideration of one knowledge which considers being as being, namely, both substance and accidents. . . .

He says, first, that being, or, that which is, is predicated in many

ways. But we must know that something is predicated of different things in many ways; sometimes, according to an intelligibility which is entirely the same, and then it is said to be univocally predicated of them, as animal of the horse and the ox. Sometimes the predicate is predicated according to entirely different intelligibilities, and then it is said to be predicated equivocally of them, as dog, of the star and the animal. Sometimes the predicate is predicated according to intelligibilities which are partly different and partly not different; different, that is, inasmuch as they imply different relationships; the same, inasmuch as these different relationships are referred to some one and the same thing. Then they are said to be predicated analogously, that is, proportionally, according as each one, by its own relationship, is referred to that one same thing.

Secondly, we must know that that one thing to which the different relationships are referred in analogates is one in number, and not merely in intelligibility. . . .

Every being is called being, in relation to one first thing. This "one first thing" . . . is the subject. For some things are called being, or are said to be, because of themselves they have *esse*, such as substances, which are principally and primarily called beings. But others are called beings, because they are the passions or properties of substance, such as the *per se* properties of any substance. Some others are called beings, because they are the way to substance, such as generation and motion. Still others are called beings, because they are the corruptions of substance, for corruption is a way to nonbeing, as generation is the way to substance. And because corruption ends at privation, as generation at form, it is suitable that even the privations of substantial form are said to be. And again, qualities or some other accidents are called beings, because they are active or generative principles of substance, or of such things as are related to substance according to one of the above-mentioned relationships, or according to any other relationship. Likewise, the negations of those things which are referred to substance, or even of substance itself, are said to be. Hence, we say, "not-being is not-being." We would not say this, unless "to be" pertained in some way to negation.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. IV, lect.
1 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 534-
536, 539).*

14. Essences: Simple and Composite

The intelligible nature of quiddity or essence does not require that it is composed or a composite. Consequently, there can be found and understood a simple quiddity, which is not a result of the composition of form and matter. But if we find a quiddity which is not composed

of matter and form, that quiddity either is its esse, or it is not. If that quiddity is its esse, it will perforce be the essence of God himself, which is its esse, and it will be entirely simple. But if it is not its esse, it is necessary that it have an esse acquired from another, as is every created quiddity. And because this quiddity is by supposition not subsisting in matter, esse will not be acquired by it in another, as is the case with composite quiddities, but it will acquire esse in itself. And so, this quiddity will be that *which* is, and its esse will be that by which it is. And because everything which does not have a perfection of itself is possible with regard to that perfection, such a quiddity, since it has esse from another, will be possible with regard to that esse and with regard to that principle from which it has esse (in which principle no potency can be found). And thus in such a quiddity there will be found potency and act, inasmuch as the quiddity itself is possible, and its esse is its act. This is the way I understand composition of potency and act in Angels, and of that by which they are and that which they are, and likewise in the soul. Hence, an Angel or the soul can be called a quiddity, or a nature, or a simple form, inasmuch as their quiddity is not composed of diverse principles; and yet they have a composition of these two, that is, of quiddity and esse.

*Commentary on the First Book
of the Sentences, dis. 8, q. 5,
art. 2.*

15. *Multiplicity in a Species*

Whenever the essence of some thing is divided by the participation [of many in it], the same essence is participated according to its intelligible constitution, but not according to the same act of existing. Therefore, it is impossible for that in which essence and esse do not differ to be divided or multiplied by an essential participation.

*Commentary on the First Book
of the Sentences, dis. 2, q. 1,
art. 1, arg. 4*

16. *Multiplicity and Composition os. Unity*

That which is simply the First can only be one, and this for three reasons. First, from the order of the universe, whose parts are discovered to lx; ordered to each other, somewhat like the parts of an animal in the whole animal, which parts help each other. There can be no such coordination of many things, unless they are striving for some one end. Therefore there must be one highest and ultimate good, which is striven for by all, and this is the principle. Secondly, this is evident from the very nature of things. For we find in all things the "nature" of being, in some of greater value, and in others of less. And

yet the natures of these things are not the esse which they have. If they were, esse would belong to the understanding of any essence, and this is false, for the quiddity of any thing can be understood, without understanding that it is. Therefore, it is necessary that they have esse from some principle, and ultimately we must come to something whose very nature is his own esse, otherwise we would have an infinite regress. This is the principle which gives esse to all things, and it can be only one, since the "nature" of being has one intelligibility' according to an analogy. For the unity' of what is caused requires unity' in its per se cause, and this is the proof of Avicenna. The third reason is the immateriality of God. For it is necessary that the cause which moves the heavens be a power which is not in matter, as is proved in the eighth book of the *Physics*. In those things which are without matter, there can be no diversity', except inasmuch as the nature of one is more complete and more in act than the nature of another. Therefore, it is necessary' that that which is perfectly complete and entirely act, is only one, from which proceeds everything that contains potency. For act precedes potency, and the complete precedes the lessened, as is proved in the ninth book of the *Metaphysics*.

*Commentary on the Second
Book of the Sentences*, dis. 1,
q. I, art. 1.

17. *The Meaning of Being*

Since in everything which is, it is possible to consider its quiddity, by which it subsists in a determinate nature, and its esse, by which it is said to be in act, the noun *thing* is given to it from its quiddity, according to Avicenna, but the name, *He Who is*, or *Being*, from the act of being. But since it is the case that in every' creature its essence differs from its esse, such a thing is properly named from its quiddity, as "man" from "humanity." But in God his very act of existing is His quiddity, and so the name which is taken from the act of existing properly names Him, and is His proper name.

*Commentary on the First Book
of the Sentences*, dis. 8, q. 1,
art. 1.

CHAPTER VI

The Intrinsic Principles of Being:

II. As Analogously One

39. Comparison of the three sets of intrinsic principles

We have seen that the individual beings of our experience are composed of various sets of principles. To sum up the results of our preceding investigation, we can consider a being thus:

being	fact of existing		
	[essence	[accident	
		[substance	[form
			[matter

If we look back at our arguments by which we discovered these principles, we find matter and substance are alike in this: that each is a common subject for a different type of change, and that essence is somewhat similar to matter and substance in that it is the source of possibility in being itself. Hence, we can link up these principles in a proportionate series thus:

accident	form	esse
substance	matter	essence

Considering these principles in this relationship, we can find a corresponding similarity in accident, form, and esse, for each of them determines a subject, making its correlative subject to be respectively such, this kind or species of thing, or simply to exist. Yet there are also differences in the three sets of correlatives. For example, the subject of accidents is a being in itself, whereas the subject of form is a mere possibility of being-determined-to-

some-essence, and essence, in turn, receives all its reality in receiving the act of existing. Hence these three sets of principles, being both similar and different in their relationships to each other, are analogous to each other; and the analogy is an analogy of proper proportionality within a being.¹ But inasmuch as they are analogous, their relationships can be summed up in a single relationship, which is called "act and potency," or the "act-potency correlation."

We first discovered act and potency in the preliminary analysis of change,² and at that time we saw that that which changes is first *in potency* and later on *in act*. We saw at that time that the stages of being *in potency* and being *in act* exclude each other—that which is in potency is not yet in act, and that which is in act is no longer in potency. But a further analysis of change showed us that the thing which changes is composed, and the still more detailed analysis of change carried on in the preceding chapter (Chapter V) showed us that the changing things of our experience have at least a triple composition of essence and esse, substance and accident, and matter and form. We need therefore to learn a new and different meaning of "act" and "potency," a meaning which is to be developed from a much more advanced knowledge of change.⁸

What is meant by "act"? We need to go back to experience and consider what has been acquired when something has come to be in act. For example, actual knowledge of biology is what the biologist has when he is considering what he has previously learned. Act is, for example, seeing as compared with the inactivity of closed eyes; being awake as compared to the unconsciousness of sleep; what the carpenter does to a piece of wood when he is at work; the way in which a wax candle is molded as compared to the possibility of being thus molded when it was

¹ Note that we do not say, "Accident is to its esse as substance is to its esse," and so forth. Why we cannot do this will be clear from Chap. XII, sec. 88.

*See above, Chap. IV.

* On the meaning of "act," see Selected Passages, No. 18.

just a roundish lump; the billiard ball rolling as compared to its previous state of rest; the new tissue become human in the living body of a man as compared to the assimilability of the undigested food. Thus, act may mean any sort of activity, immanent or transient, any sort of actuality, determination, or perfection. Hence, act is an intrinsically analogous intelligibility;⁴ with what analogy', we shall see later on.

So, too, with potency as a capacity for act. Potency in itself, it is true, is not act. But we must understand potency positively. Take, for example, the knowledge of biology (the information of a certain kind, and competence in using it). A baby, a puppy, and a doll are alike in this: that none of them know biology; they do not have or possess the actual knowledge. But from our experience with human beings we have found out that some adults know biology and that all (normal) adults can learn it. From this we infer that the baby also can learn biology. We also know that puppies and dolls cannot. There is therefore a real difference between them and the baby: the baby has a potency to know biology; the others do not have this potency. Now, such a potency is something real, but it is not something which can be discovered in itself as *potency*. (The potency we have been studying here is an operative potency, a potency to perform an operation or action. Some operative potencies can sometimes be without their acts, but we cannot apply this to other types of potency.)

Another type of potency is commonly called "passive potency." A passive potency is one which merely receives an act or perfection. For example, a piece of wood or wax is in potency to receive another shape than the one it has now. But its potency to receive a shape (which potency is the substance) is almost purely passive—that is, it depends almost entirely on something

*"Act," when used about the things of our immediate experience, is an intelligibility, not a being or even a principle of being. There is no being of our experience which is purely act; and each of the actuating principles of being is some *kind of act*: form, esse, accident, operation. See also below, sec. 74.

else outside it. A thing at rest is in potency to local motion, and this potency depends entirely on something outside itself to be actuated. A piece of steak is in potency to become part of a living tiling, and in this case the potency is the primary matter. This steak can become living, not by itself but by the activity of a dog or a man, for example. Primary matter, in itself, is a pure potency; that is, of itself it has no act and cannot positively contribute to the acquiring of an act. Passive potencies other than primary matter and the capacity for local motion are passive only inasmuch as a subject is capable of receiving a perfection, or determination. Thus, the sense powers, the human intellect, and the will are primarily passive.⁵ But they are not *purely* passive; they are also principles of operation. So, too, essence is a potency for the act of existing. We never *find* essences in potency—this would be a contradiction—but always as actuated. And yet the facts of change, limitation, and multiplicity show that essence of itself *can* be and that the act of existing is precisely that by which an individual essence is in the real order.

40. Theorems of act and potency

Thus it is clear that act and potency are first learned in relation to each other. As we find them in immediate experience, neither act nor potency are absolute designations: act is the act of a potency; potency is the potency to some act. When we attempt to state the relations between act and potency accurately, we state them in exact propositions or formulas which may be called "theorems."

1. *Act and potency are distinct in their order.*

The act and potency we have been talking about so far are real act and potency, and we have already seen—in the case of substance and accident, matter and form, essence and esse—that

* It is important to note that "passivity" should be considered not merely in relation to form or esse or efficient cause but also—and this is a fundamental point often overlooked—in relation to final cause (purpose, end, goal).

these principles are really distinct. By a real distinction, we mean a real absence of identity, independent of any ones consideration of them. Act and potency can also be found in the logical order: the subject of a proposition is potential to the predicate, the genus to the difference. But these are considerations of the mind and, consequently, are distinct with a distinction of reason.⁸

However, in one case, we raised a question: What is the proper potency for which activity (operation, action) is the act?⁹ We saw that the nature of a thing is the same as its substance, and we understand nature as the ultimate principle of activity. But now we must recall that from one point of view—as essence—the substance is the potency for the act of existing. From another point of view—as substance—the essence (in the strict sense) is the potency for the various accidents. Ultimately, of course, the substance—as nature—is the potency for activity. Is this third case the same as the other two?

We must first recall certain points which we have already discovered. The operation or activity of any limited thing is not and cannot be identical with the act of existing. For, (f1) transient action affects something distinct from the agent, whereas the esse of a thing is its own, and (b) immanent actions are interrupted, whereas the esse of the thing continues throughout interruptions and variations.⁸ Secondly, other accidents are modifications or determinations of substance; they confer an added or secondary perfection to the essence-side of being rather than to the existence-principle. Thirdly, activity is by no means the same as substance and certainly is not the substantial form of a being.

*On distinctions, see above, sec. 25.

† See above, sec. 35.

⁹This argument is sufficient for all the beings of our immediate experience. If we wish a complete argument which would include even the angels, who are not subject to such variations, we can take the argument of St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 54, art. 3, which is based on the intrinsic and necessary correlation of act to potency. Since activity is a distinct kind of act, its proper potency must be a distinct one, proportioned to the act, and this potency is precisely the accidental operative potency, or power.

Fourthly, activity is on the side of existence; it presupposes existence. Yet the act of existing simply cannot be considered as in any way at all a potency, so that the act of existing could be the potential principle which receives activity. Once a thing *is*, that is its ultimate actuality.

And yet, particularly in the case of living things, we can see that there is a potency to act, even when an activity has been temporarily interrupted. When, for example, we speak of a person's ability, we are designating some principle within that person, not an activity, not his substance, not his act of existing, but rather a quality (modification, disposition) of the nature. In other words, the proper potential principle of activity is a qualitative accident, really distinct from the substance (as all accidents are), and really distinct from the activity as its potential and receptive principle. We will use the term "power" as the proper term for an operative potency (or accidental principle of activity).

2. *Act and potency are not strictly beings but principles of being.*

If act and potency were each a being, they could not be found combined within a single being (1 being + 1 being = 2 beings). In every order, act is that *by which* a being is or is some kind of thing or exists according to some modification; and for its part potency is that *by which* a thing can be or can be some kind of a thing or can exist according to some modification. But because act and potency are precisely principles of being, we can correctly speak of them as being, by an analogy of proportion.

This analogy, however, works out differently in the different analogues of act and potency. The most proper sense of *being* is that-which-is, or something-having-esse. The being, properly speaking, is the whole. And only the entire thing perfectly fulfills the intelligibility of "that which is." But, after the whole, and in a derived and less perfect sense, the various principles of a being can be called beings, to the extent and according to the way in which they pertain to being and share in the esse of the

whole. Among the secondary analogues, essence has the closest relation to the whole, since essence is precisely that which (is). Substance and accident are the constitutive principles by which the essence is this essence. Substance, as we saw, is that principle of essence by which an essence has being *in itself*. Within essence, therefore, substance is the more proper subject of the act of existing. Accident is, on the other hand, *by being in another* (that is, in substance) as in a subject. According to its nature, therefore, accident is called being inasmuch as it actually inheres in the substance which is in itself. Yet, accident is as act to substance, which is as potency. The substances of the things of our experience could not exist as stripped of their accidents, since in that condition they would be indeterminate within one whole order of essence and yet have their ultimate act, which is *esse*. Accident, on the contrary, is act in the order of essence, but its relation to *esse* is naturally indirect, that is, through substance? Matter and form are not directly beings but rather principles of substance, which is being by proportion. By being the principles of substance, form and matter can be called beings by a double proportion—form, more properly, inasmuch as it is the actualizing principle of substance; matter, less properly, or more remotely, inasmuch as it is capable of being actualized by form and so made suitable to receive an act of existing. *Esse*, however, although it is most truly act among all the principles of being and is precisely that by which a being *is*, nevertheless, in the beings of our experience, is precisely distinguished from essence and so is *not* a *subject* of existing in those beings. Hence, in all such composite beings the act of existing cannot be called a being even by proportion. The act of existing—as a principle of being—is not that which shares in, or is proportioned to, an act, but is precisely the act which is shared, to which there is a proportion.

3. *Act, in the order in which it is act, is unlimited in itself and limited by the potency in which it is received.*

* For the consequences of this special nature of accident, see below, sec. 90.

All the beings of our immediate experience are limited, and the acts they have are likewise limited. Act, as we find it, is a principle of being. Acts are found as perfections of some being. They are all limited acts, correlates of some potency. Indeed, all acts of limited beings are necessarily limited. This holds true, whether the act in question is *esse*, substantial form, accidental form, or activity. Thus, the act of understanding as it really occurs is necessarily limited, as the act of this or that power, of this or that person. The knowledge of biology for instance, as it is to be found in any existing biologist, is limited by his particular capacity. The act of playing a violin by even the most skilled of violinists is in fact limited and determinate. The accident of whiteness, as it is found in any white thing, is a particular grade *of* whiteness. The circularity of any round thing is just the kind of roundness that a material subject can have.

But none of these acts is a limitation of itself—not the act of understanding, not the act of playing the violin, not the substantial form of man, not the act of seeing. A limited act is this limited act precisely and only because it is received in the potency or proceeds from the potency. Any accident inhering in a substance is limited by the nature of the substance; thus, “roundness,” as it really exists, is limited by the nature of the substance which is round. In the order of matter and form, we can also see the limitation of act by potency. For example, a man is a man by his substantial form, which is his soul; but human nature is never found in its complete fullness in any existing man because the soul, in being the act of a particular body, can actuate the potency only as it is in that particular body. Similarly, in the order of knowledge, the relationship between the absolute nature and the individual is a relationship of limitation. What is meant by “man” taken in itself is verified in “Peter” according to the limitations of Petreity. In the judgment, “Peter is a man,” “man” is not found according to its full perfection as absolute nature but is limited and particularized by its reference to Peter.

In the orders of accident and substance, we have been speaking

of the "limitation" of act by potency. To understand this more clearly, we must recall that some accidents are acts in one order and potencies in another. This situation is especially verified in the case of the powers which as accidental qualities are acts of substances, but as powers are potencies to activity or the under-going of activity. Take, for example, the human power to see. The power of sight is a qualitative act and, as such, is limited by the potency which receives it: the substance of the person who possesses such a power. On the other hand, the power of sight is an operative potency' which limits the act of seeing. When therefore we say, "Accidents are limited by the substances in which they' are received," we must understand "accidents inasmuch as they are acts," because accidents, in the order in which they are potency (namely, in the order of operation), are themselves principles of limitation. There is a sense in which we can say that a potency is "unlimited"; for example, my potency' to see is unlimited, in the sense that I *can see* all visible things, but my act of seeing is limited at any particular time, in the sense that I actually *see*, not all visible things but only some few. Here, the unlimitedness of potency is precisely an imperfection, for my' being able to see is not the act of seeing at all. The unlimitedness of my ability to see is at the opposite pole from act, for the ability' to see is no vision at all. This kind of unlimitedness we will call "indétermination." When, on the other hand, we speak of an act being unlimited as act, we mean an unlimitedness in the sense of completeness of perfection. For example, as an act of vision, seeing this white paper is entirely determinate and is completely perfect as act of vision, but *my* act of seeing is in fact limited by the capacity or ability of my eye.

There are several points which tend to interfere with the perfect understanding of the relationship between act and potency. One of them is that essences seem to be limited to what they are by being themselves and not by any potency. For example, a horse by' being a horse is not a cow, and so horseness by being horseness is not cowncss. It would thus seem that essence, which

is an act, is limited by itself. But this is a confusion. Horseness is not limited by being horseness, for cowness is not a limitation of horseness at all in any sense. If cowness were unreal, impossible, and even unthinkable, horseness would not be the more perfect for that. If we stay strictly in the order of essence, then essence is precisely unlimited as essence; one essence is not limited by another or by itself; essence is limited by individuation (horse as horse is complete in itself; it is not lessened by "cow" but is limited in "Man of War"). The source of the confusion is that some philosophers have failed to distinguish between being and essence; they say, "A horse by being a horse is limited, for it is not also a cow." Do they mean, "is limited as a being" or "is limited as a horse"? It is true that a horse, by being a horse, is in a limited way; but this is not a limitation of essence by essence but of the act of existing by essence.

A second confusion which sometimes occurs to philosophers is the apparent limitation of a being by its efficient cause. For example, a pail has the potency of holding water, but how full it is seems to depend on how much someone pours into it, and this is a limitation by efficient cause. Two remarks are to be made about this and all similar examples. First, what is limited in the example is not an act but a complete being (the water or whatever else is used as an example). Secondly, the potency in question is not a real potency (for example, an intrinsic potency of the pail), but it can be thought of as a property of the space (which is not a real being). Hence, this kind of example does not illustrate the relationship of potency and act, for it contains neither potency nor act but a number of beings which are composed of potency and act. Another sort of example sometimes used shows merely that an efficient cause is necessary for the production of a limited being. A line, for example, is divisible, but it is actually divided only when an efficient cause makes a division in it. How long a given line is to be depends on the cause which produces the line. But note that we are dealing either with an abstract line (which as abstract is a pure form, and so its precise length is a formal

characteristic) or with a line in or on the surface of a real being. In the former case, the line is completely perfect as a line; that is, if it is a five-inch line, it is absolutely and completely perfect as five-inch line, and that it is not a six-inch line is by no means a limitation of a five-inch line. (Line, as genus, of course, is unlimited in the sense of being indeterminate; but in that sense, "five-inch line" doesn't limit 'line,' it determines it formally.) On the other hand, if we are speaking of a line on the surface of an existent being, the perfection of the line is limited by the nature of the surface on which it is, and this kind of limitation the efficient cause can do nothing about. All the examples drawn from quantity and quantified perfection are subject to the same confusion.

With these clarifications in mind, we can now take up the limitation of the act of existing. All the beings of our experience are limited as beings; a being as we find it is always some *kind* of being. So, too, the acts of existing which pertain to limited beings are limited. For example, a tree exists according to the nature of a tree; it is by an act of existing proportioned to that nature. A man is, and he is in the way in which human nature proportionately has the act of existing. Human existence, the *esse* of a man, is different from the existence of any and every other kind of being. Is the act of existing limited in and by itself? If we were to say that it is, we would be implicitly contradicting the evidence that the act of existing is that-by-which-a-being exists, simply and absolutely. If the act of existing were limited as act, then things could be only in that one limited way, and other kinds of existents could not be. And so the act of existing, like all other acts, is limited by the potency in which it is received, namely, essence.

4. *Act can be known by itself, potency only through act.*

This proposition does not mean that in every single case we discover the potency through its act; it does mean that in the first instance of any kind, we can discover potency only through act. If we know something about explosives, we can calculate how

strong a particular charge is without setting it off. If we already know something about biology and chemistry, we can sometimes predict what a particular new drug will do. But if we had never heard of radar and knew nothing about electronics, we could not even make an intelligent guess about what a radar set could do if it were turned on. So, too, with living things; to find out whether a grain of wheat is dead or alive we wait to see whether it actually grows or not.

Ultimately, the reason why this is true is that we derive our first knowledge of tilings from the things themselves. This means that in the first instance things must act upon us before we know them; things do not act inasmuch as they are in potency but in act.¹⁰

5. *Act and potency divide being in general.*

The things of our experience are neither simply potency nor simply act but composed of potency and act, and that in many ways. In the order of existence, being is divided into potency and act: essence and the act of existing. In this order, potency cannot *be* without its act, for a thing is through its act of existing. Likewise, in this order, a thing either is or is not; there is no other alternative. In the order of accident, that-which-is is divided into substance and accident, and here, too, there is no third alternative; nor can either one of them naturally exist without the other. In the order of substance, material substance is divided into matter and form. Between matter and form there is no third alternative; matter cannot be without any act. In the order of operation, there is potency to act (power) and operation or activity itself. Here, however, some powers can be without their operation. We find habits, which are acts by comparison with the power of operation itself, but potency in comparison with the operation.

41. Concluding remarks about act and potency

In connection with the order of operation or activity, there are

* On the priority of potency to act, and act to potency, see Selected Passages, No. 19.

ways of speaking with which we must have some acquaintance. There is, for instance, the term "active power." By an active power, we mean the power which an agent has of influencing something else. It is called "active" by comparison with the thing influenced, but it is called "power" because it is not identical with the action or operation.

Again, there is the term "virtual act," by which we mean that *x* has the power of producing *Y* and usually imply that *x* itself does not have the perfection of *Y*. For example, in logic it is said that the premises of an argument "virtually" contain the conclusion; this means that the premises bring about the conclusion, but they do not have identically the same perfection.

Finally, there are the expressions "first act" and "second act." For example, if a thing has the nature or essence of man, we say it is human in first act; when it performs the activities proper to man, we say it is human in second act. In general, if we line up the following factors thus:

form	esse	accidents	activity	causality
(first act)				(second act)

we may lay down this general rule for the use of the terms "first act" and "second act": of any two terms in the above line, the term to the left is first act relatively to the term on the right."

In reflecting on the act-potency correlation and its various analogates, we must be careful to keep in mind our order of approach. First, we found the distinction between substance and accident, matter and form, essence and the act of existing. The arguments for the distinction of substance and accident and of

|| That which is pure potency is primary matter. "Form" is very often defined as "the first act of matter," for matter cannot receive any other act until it is informed; once informed, it can be, be modified, act, and cause. Of course, this sequence of acts is not a sequence in time. Moreover, we need not take the next term in the series for our comparison of first and second. Thus, when form is called "first act," authors most often are thinking of accident or activity as "second." The series as it is presented above is not something which should be memorized; it is given as a key to help us read St. Thomas and other authors who use the expressions "first act" and "second act."

matter and form are very similar and are very closely connected; nevertheless, they are, strictly speaking, independent arguments. The distinction between essence and the act of existing is found without any direct logical dependence upon the previous two arguments. It is only after these sets of principles are each distinctly known that we can see their similarity and formulate this similarity as "the act-potency correlation."

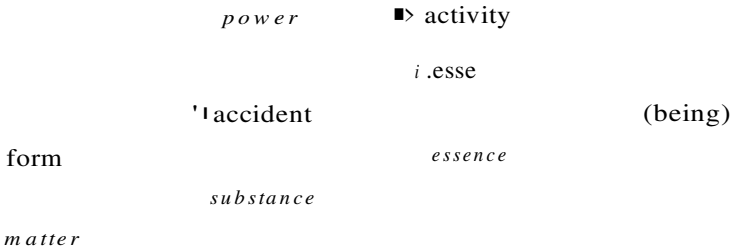
There are two consequences of this approach to act and potency. The first is that we cannot simply *deduce* the existence or distinction of these principles from any of the theorems of act and potency. Nevertheless, we can learn a great deal about each set of principles from our reflections on them as analogously act and potency. One clear case is the discovery of power as an accidental principle of operation in limited beings, which we cannot clearly understand except by reflecting upon activity as an act and reasoning to its corresponding potency. Again, although each set of constitutive principles has its own unique, independent characteristics, the discovery of the analogical unity of these principles as act and potency helps us to see the unity, the internal consistency, and the harmony of being.

Secondly, act and potency are analogous conceptions. The pairs of correlatives—matter and form, substance and accident, essence and esse, and power and activity—are analogous to each other with the analogy of proper proportionality. But, esse, activity, accident, and substantial form are analogously act. Esse is the one principle which is act without qualification, for it is the actuality of any and all principles and the actuality of being. The other acts are acts by proportion,¹² inasmuch as they are similar

"The analogy of proportion here is somewhat different from the other analogies of proportion we have found to hold between the intrinsic constitutive principles of being, essence, and substance. The previously found instances (by inherence and by information) could be called "intrinsic," since the analogues are directly related to each other and are denominated from the whole which they intrinsically constitute. In the analogy of proportion by which esse, activity, and form are all called "act," we find an extrinsic similarity; none of the principles are principles of one whole inasmuch as they are acts. Yet there is a proportion and a dependence of

to, and yet not the same kind of act as, esse. Similarly, but in inverse order, primar}' matter is pure potency without qualification. All other potencies are potencies by the analogy of proportion, inasmuch as, in relation to their acts, they are determinable and actuable in a way similar to the potency which is primary matter.

In every' one of the analogates of potency and act, we find a mutual correlation. Act, as we find it, is always the act of a potency, and potency is that which receives, possesses, and is actuated by act. But potency is always for the sake of act; potency is ordered to act. We can by no means say' that every' act is ordered to its potency. Hence, act and potency are not equal principles. Potency is an absence of act, yet at the same time it is suited to the act which is its perfection and complement. Perhaps the interlocking of act and potency can be symbolized in the following diagram, in which the italicized terms are the potencies and the "direction" of the order is indicated by the arrow.



In all these cases, the order of potency to act can be expressed in several ways. "Order" means specification, intelligibility'—potency is known and defined by its act; "order" means suitability or conformability'—potency and act "fit" each other, though with obvious differences in the various cases.

all other acts upon esse, so that esse is the primary analogue of act. Hence, we would call this an *extrinsic* analogy of proportion. However, in the order of discovery and knowledge, activity is found first, and all other acts are discovered through activity; see Selected Passages, No. 18. On the relation of this analog)' and the other analogies previously discovered, see below, sec. 108.

In the case of power and activity, a very important, special kind of order is to be found. A striking instance of this can be seen in beings which have knowledge. We find that men, for example, can be in three different states with regard to some activity. (1) They can be simply not acting in this particular way. (2) They can be actually engaged in that activity. (3) They can be wanting to act but not doing so for one reason or another. This situation shows us the factor of desire or tendency. Animals likewise have likes, desires, and so on. Plants are not only *able* to grow but tend to; we truly say, for example, that their roots "push" their way—who has not seen a cement sidewalk broken by a tree root seeking water? We even personify nonliving things and say that they "want" this and that, indicating that we discover in them active tendencies. Every power of operation is thus a tendency to that operation.¹⁸ Tin's is so much the case that in nonfree agents that do not undergo structural changes, if the power is present and not externally impeded, the activity is also necessarily there. The very notion of "violence," with its corresponding notions of "active resistance," "reluctance," and so on, testifies to the reality of tendency in things. The tendencies of things flow from the proper nature (substance) and are determined in various ways, depending on the kind of nature and the kind of power. We will have to consider power as active tendency again in the two following chapters.

42. Exercise

Take the three major analogues of act and potency (matter and form, substance and accident, essence and esse), and apply to them the five theorems of the act-potency correlation, pointing out both likenesses and differences between the theorems as stated generally and the particular analogue in question.

^u In the philosophy of human nature, we find that over and above the tendencies identified with powers of operation (called "natural tendencies" or "natural appetitos"), beings with knowledge also have *conscious* tendencies which are distinct powers (sometimes called "animal appetites").

43. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, Bk. I, chap. 22 (the identity of essence and esse in God); Bk. II, chap. 54 (compendious summary of act and potency in relation to the various analogues); *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 84, art. 2 (limitation of form by matter); q. 87, art. 3 (act is known before potency); *Compendium of Theology*, chap. 18, par. 1 (limitation of act by potency); *On Spiritual Creatures*, art. 1 (on the nature of pure forms).

Jacques Maritain, *Introduction to Philosophy*, trans. E. I. Watkin (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1933), pp. 239-256.

A. D. Sertillanges, O.P., *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy* (St. Louis, B. Herder, 1931), pp. 25-44.

William A. Van Roo, S.J., "Act and Potency," *The Modern Schoolman*, XVIII (1940), 1-5.

John Wild, "Tendency: The Ontological Ground of Ethics," *Journal of Philosophy*, XLIX (1952), 468-472; an excellent presentation of tendency.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

18. *Origin and Meaning of the Term "Act"*

He shows what it is to be in act, and he says, that this word *act*—which is used to signify the entelechy and perfection (that is, the form), and other things of a like nature, as any operations whatsoever—is derived mainly from motion, as far as the origin of the term is concerned. Since names are the signs of intellectual conceptions, we first impose names on those things which we first understand, even though they may be later according to the order of nature. But among all the acts, motion is the best known and evident, for it is sensibly experienced by us. And so it first of all was given the name of act, and from motion, the term was applied to other things.

Hence, motion is not applied to things which do not exist, although other predicates are applied to non-existents; for we say that non-beings are intelligible, or objects of opinion, or even desirable, but we do not say that they are moved. Since "to be moved" means "to be in act," it would follow that actual non-beings would actually be, and this is evidently false.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. IX, lect. 3
(ed. Cathala, Nos. 1805-
1806).*

19. *Priority of Act over Potency*

Act is naturally prior to potency. And, simply speaking, it is prior in time, for potency is not moved to act except by a being in act,

although in one and the same subject which is at one time in potency, at another in act, potency temporally precedes act. Hence, it is clear that form is prior rather than matter, and is also being more than matter is, because "that by reason of which something is such, is itself more such." But matter does not become a being in act except by form. Hence, it is necessary that form is being more than matter is.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. VII, lect. 2
(ed. Cathala, No. 1278).*

First, act is prior to potency in intelligibility. . . . That by which another is necessarily defined, is prior to it in intelligibility, as "animal" is prior to "man," and "subject" to "accident." But potency cannot be defined except by act. For the first intelligibility of the possible consists in this, that it is suitable for it to act or to be in act, as "a builder" is "he who can build," and "a speculator" "one who can speculate," and "the visible" is "that which can be seen," and so on. Therefore it is necessary that the intelligibility of act precede the intelligibility of potency, and the knowledge of act the knowledge of potency. Hence, Aristotle earlier manifested potency, defining it by act; but act he could not define by anything else, but only manifested it inductively.

[Secondly] he shows how act is prior to potency in time, and how not prior. . . . Therefore, he says first that act is prior to potency in time, in this sense that in the same species, the agent, or the being in act, is prior to the being in potency; but one and the same numerical subject is in potency temporally before it is in act. . . .

After the Philosopher has shown that act is prior to potency in intelligibility, and in some sense in time, he shows that it is prior in "substance" . . . that is, in perfection. . . . If perfection and end did not consist in act, there would not seem to be any difference between a wise man . . . and a fool.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. IX, lects. 7,
8 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 1846-
1847, 1856, 1861).*

CHAPTER VII

The Extrinsic Principles of Being:

I. The Agent

44. Principles of change

Change has already been considered from the point of view of the principles within (intrinsic to) the thing which changes. These principles we have found to be either matter and form or substance and accident. Are these principles sufficient to bring about a change? Or is there something outside the thing to produce the change?

In our experience, we not only find things changing but, in very many instances, we find within direct experience factors external to the changing thing which accomplish the change. For example, we experience a match lighting a cigarette, ourselves pushing an object to make it move, hitting things and being hit by them, and so forth.

Sometimes we make mistakes in determining which agent is the source of a particular change; for example, little children may think that when they turn on the light switch, they are the agent which brings about the light. The child is an agent, not directly of the light but of the local motion of the switch. His action closes a circuit, removes an impediment to the activity of the dynamo. Such an agent which removes an impediment for another agent is called an *active condition*¹ of the effect of the sec-

¹The English word "condition" more commonly means a "passive condition," or disposition, which is in the line of material causality. The verb, "to condition," is used both in the active sense (bring about a disposition or qualification) and in the intransitive sense (be a disposition).

ond agent. At other times, with regard to causes and effects outside ourselves, we may even confuse an occasion with a cause. By an *occasion* we mean a factor that provides an opportunity for an agent to act. In some cases, we may not be able to distinguish which of the factors present before an effect is the cause, and which are the conditions and occasions; sometimes our failure to distinguish arises from negligence or inattention on our part. Here are also many situations in which we do not immediately perceive the change as coming from an agent. For example, before the discovery that lightning is an electrical discharge, it was popularly thought that the damage was caused by the thunder (hence the expression "thunderbolt"). (In O. Henry's classic story, "The Ransom of Red Chief," the kidnaped boy asks his captors, "Do the trees moving make the wind blow?")

But even if we sometimes make mistakes in determining the agent or are unable directly to perceive the agent or sometimes confuse an agent with a condition or even an occasion, it remains true that sometimes we do perceive an agent bringing about a change in some other thing. Hence, a child's perception of his causality can be erroneous to some extent, but his error does not invalidate his perception and direct experience of himself causing something.

Our immediate experience of causality, either as children in the first instance or later on, is a direct and concrete knowledge that a cause is working. We do not have a clear and distinct, abstractive concept of cause, for cause and causality are not essences. But even on the level of spontaneous knowledge we have a true and certain (judgmental) knowledge of causes. In the present chapter, we are trying to obtain a scientific knowledge of causality.

As far as terms are concerned, when we use the word "agent," we mean "that which brings about a change in some other thing"; an agent is also called an "efficient cause." The thing which is changed by some agent is called a "patient"; that which is brought about in the patient is called an "effect."

45. Causal factors

In Chapter V we discussed the intrinsic principles of change (substance and accident, matter and form). Inasmuch as these principles not only are necessary for the explanation of change but also join in the coming-to-be of the effect, we can consider these principles to be intrinsic causal factors. Substance and matter, which are both potency to change, are called the "material factors" or "material causes"; accident and substantial form, which are the acts by which the being is what it is and such as it is, are called the "formal factors" or "formal causes." How and in what sense can these intrinsic principles be called *causal factors*? Because each in its own way concurs in the coming-to-be of the effect. The material cause has its influence in the effect by being the subject and determinable factor in the patient, in other words, by its self-communication to the effect as fully constituted. The formal cause has its influence in the effect by being the act by which the effect is actually what it is, in other words, by its self-communication as the determining and specifying factor.

The agent is distinguished from the intrinsic principles, first, because it is extrinsic to the patient, that is, is not a part of the patient precisely as such, and secondly, because the precise way in which it influences the effect is by its activity, by acting.

There is also a fourth causal factor, the goal or end (final cause) which influences the effect by determining the agent to act; we will consider this factor in the next chapter.

What precisely does a cause do? In general, it influences the actual being of something; it makes something to be in act. A cause influences the act of existing of some thing. This influence is what we directly designate when we speak of "causality."

46. The causality of the agent or efficient cause

Only a being-in-act can be an efficient cause. A potency, as such, can only be a material cause; that is, it is a cause inasmuch

as by receiving the action of a cause according to its capacity it influences the coming-to-be of an effect. From the viewpoint of action, a potency is a principle by which beings can be acted on. We have seen that various principles of being can be considered as "acts." Can we identify the activity of causing with any of the other acts of a being? A careful comparison of each of these acts to causing will not only help to answer this question but will greatly increase our understanding of causality. First, a being is in act when it possesses substantial form, and so substantial form is an act (correlated with primary matter). Is substantial form the act by which immediately a being is an agent? This act is not sufficient to make a being a cause. It is true that an efficient cause actually must be of a certain kind or species and must be a being in itself, but (a) substantial form is of itself the act of a matter, and its direction is toward the internal constitution of a being, and (b) a patient must likewise be of a certain kind and be in itself, so that it can receive an influence. Secondly, the act of existing is certainly an act—in a sense, it is the ultimate act even of substances, accidents, and forms. And we can go so far as to say that the *esse* of a thing is the root of all its agency—*esse* is the dynamism of a thing. Is *esse* in a limited thing the same as its causality? No, for the actuality or dynamism which is *esse* is first and foremost an actuation of a being's *own* essence. Thirdly, the formal accidents (quality and quantity) are also acts in relation to substance, and these accidents, too, are necessary for an agent, but as such they are not activity or operation itself. Tri-directionality, expanse, shape, structure, and so on, are indeed related to the activity of material things, as we have seen; they condition and even determine it. These accidents, however, are formal causes of activity rather than acting itself.

The acting of a thing is to all the other acts of that thing as seeing is to the eye, shining to the flashlight, running to the racehorse, exercising magnetism to the magnet, and so on. "Acting" is the full internal actuation of a thing; it is the activity in its full

concrete actuality as in the agent itself. As such, it not only presupposes but in a sense includes the being's actual existence. Hence, "acting" is an analogous perfection, not only because there are different kinds of actions but more directly and immediately because it is an act in the order of existence.²

We can realize the unique character of acting by reflecting that it is not an essence (a quiddity) and not simply the act of an essence. Although being and acting cannot be separated—except partially in the case of living things whose activity is sometimes interrupted—in the beings of our immediate experience, esse is one actuality and activity a different and distinct one.

Hence, too, the potency to be is a distinct potency, essence; and the power to act is a really distinct potency, power itself.

Acting is the actuation of an existing subject *and its power* inasmuch as that actuation is in the agent. What is the relation between this act and causality? For purposes of analysis, let us consider several examples of causality. (1) Take a flashlight. It must be a certain kind of substance; it must be structured in a certain way; it must not be worn out; and so on. But merely from the possession of all these acts it does not yet have the full actuality of a flashlight. It exists, it has a formal structure; but as *flashlight* it is still in potency. When the switch is closed, a new act occurs. The flashlight is now *shining*. Is it necessarily *illuminating* anything? Suppose the light ray is beamed into a vacuum. The light continues to shine, but nothing happens to any other being. Now, suppose an opaque object is moved into the path of the beam. Immediately that object is illuminated; it is actually visible, and this visibility is caused by the light. (2) Take a man who wants to be a builder. In order to do tins work he needs certain abilities and perfections. He must know what a house looks like and how to go about building one. He must decide what he wants to do and, finally, he must carry out his decision by appropriate

²Note how St. Thomas explains the very notion of act itself through activity; the text is quoted above (see Selected Passages, No. 18).

external activity. That activity is complex, but in the last stages it is a question of something happening to the bricks, mortar, wood, and so on, of the house that is being built.

In these examples, and others like them, we can mentally distinguish a series of steps in efficient causality (this sequence need not be verified in the form of *really distinct* steps). These distinctions will help us to understand what causality is. First of all, the agent must be in first act. A flashlight without a bulb or with worn-out batteries is still lacking part of its structural perfection, and so there is no activity. Secondly, the agent must not only be complete as a being (first act), it must be in full act as an agent. The flashlight must be actually shining, the builder actually building, and so on. Thirdly, the patient must be actually receiving the action—an opaque object being-illuminated, movable and formable objects being-built, and so on. Thus, there are three steps: a being with its tendencies, its acting, and the reception of its influence. The same three steps can be found in other cases of efficient causality. In the production of a marble statue there are (1) the sculptor with his hammer and chisel; (2) the movements of arm, hammer, and chisel; (3) the being-shaped of the marble. Hence, the causality or influence or action of the agent, considered precisely as such, is in the patient (and not in the agent).

In the patient there is a becoming, motion, or change. Considered as received *in* a subject (from an agent) which changes, the change itself is called a *passion*³ (that is, an undergoing or being-

• Let us recall again that potency is by its nature ordered to act. But this by no means implies that every potency is a passive potency, for, as we have seen in sec. 41, there are active potencies. Moreover, it is easily possible to fall into univocation in two ways. One is to imagine that all act is form and that all potency is the capability of being informed by the reception of a specifying form (the basic error of historical essentialistic Aristotelianism). The second is to think that the only cause is the efficient cause and that all passivity is toward an efficient cause (medieval nominalism made this mistake). There is the passivity of matter toward form (and this passivity is reception of a determination); there is the passivity of a passive power toward its corresponding agent (and this passivity is the reception of an influence from an agent); there is the passivity of a tendency toward

affected; the abstract term is derived from the same root as the term *patient*). Identically the same change, considered as coming to the patient *from* the agent or cause, is the action or causality.

N.B. Distinguish efficient causality in the strict sense, as we have been treating it here, from immanent activity. Immanent acting is the kind of acting or operating that we find in living things: living itself, sensing, thinking, and the like. Immanent acting is the perfection of the being which acts, whereas transient activity or causality as such is the perfection of the patient. Immanent acting will be treated in great detail in the philosophy of human nature; it will be considered only incidentally in this course.⁴

Moreover, a cause, in causing, does not *necessarily lose* anything. For example, a teacher does not lose any knowledge when he teaches someone. An engineer, an inventor, a business executive, and a statesman do not lose that which they contribute; although they expend energy, the energy is not the essential part of the causality. It is true that an agent which is a purely material being, in causing a purely material effect, does lose what it gives. But that is because of the *type* of causality involved. If a man gives money, he no longer has it; if he gives intelligent direction, he does not lose any knowledge or intelligence.

From these two considerations, a very important conclusion follows, (a) That which is already in full act does not intrinsically change in becoming a cause, for the action and the change are in the patient, (b) An agent as agent does not necessarily lose anything in causing. Hence, an agent, as agent, does not undergo change. If an agent, in our experience, does change, it does so because it is material, because it is dependent upon other causes, and so forth.

From the consideration of what is necessary in order that a its goal (and this passivity is not a reception at all—either of a form or of an influence). These remarks are merely a warning against univocation; they cannot be explained at tills point. They will be explained partly in the next two chapters and partly in the treatment of the appetites in the philosophy of human nature.

* In metaphysics, tire distinction between transient and immanent activity is important mainly from the viewpoint of finality; see below, sec. 56.

being actually be a cause, another important conclusion can be drawn. We have seen in Chapters V and VI that power and activity are related to each other as potency and act. Hence, it follows that causality, which is transient action received from an agent in a patient, and passion are identical with each other as well as with action. Hence, the passion, which is the effect in the narrowest sense of that term, is related to the operative power of the agent as act to potency. Now, we also saw that potency and act are proportioned to each other—a potency is specified by its act; an act is precisely the act *of* some potency. Hence, between the agent as agent and the patient as patient there is necessarily a proportion or similarity. Every agent causes something like itself.

To clarify this principle further we can temporarily suppose that an effect as such would be simply unlike the agent as agent, that is, neither univocally the same nor even similar in any way. An agent acts inasmuch as it is in act, not inasmuch as it is not in act. If the act (passion) produced in the patient were simply unlike the act of the agent, then the agent would not be in act in this particular way at all. Hence, we would have a being which (on the supposition it is an agent) has a certain act, yet which (on the supposition of utter unlikeness to the patient) does not have this act. This is evidently a contradiction, and so we see that the principle, “Every agent produces an effect like itself,” is necessarily true.

From this we can also see that in our universe we have (a) agents, with active powers, ordered to, and tending toward, (h) patients, with corresponding passive capacities to be acted on and modified. Hence, every' such agent capable of transient activity is radically (virtually) related to, or ordered to, any and all other beings which have the capacities to receive such activity'.

47. Types of agents: univocal and equivocal causes

The kinds of agents we find in our experience depend upon other agents for both their being and their causality'. When we

want to express the dependence of an agent upon other agents, we call it a *secondary* cause. In contrast, an agent which does not depend upon other agents is called a first cause? One special aspect of the dependence of a secondary cause upon other causes is that it presupposes a pre-existing patient; in our experience, there must be something for a secondary cause to work on before causality can take place. Consequently, the causal influence of a secondary cause upon the act of existing of another being (patient) does not consist in making something to be where nothing was before (in causing a transition from not-being simply to being) but in bringing about a transition from one kind of thing to another. Hence, we say that a secondary cause does not cause being simply but causes some kind of being. There is a further consequence of this: no thing in our experience is totally dependent upon a single agent. For an effect is dependent upon a cause only in so far as the cause is a cause. For example, a builder is the cause of the coming-to-be of a house, and, conversely, the house is dependent upon the builder for its becoming. But when this coming-to-be has reached its term, and the house is (exists) as a finished thing, it does not depend upon the builder for its being. The builder therefore is not the cause of the being of the house except indirectly as the cause of its becoming?

A second and rather easy distinction to make is based on the kind of similarity between the cause and effect.⁷ Some causes and effects are exactly of the same nature. We can see this very clearly in the ordinary' generation of living things: parent and offspring are of the same species. Similarly, the heat in the heater and in the tiling heated are exactly the same kind of perfection. Any cause which has strictly the same kind of perfection as the effect is called a "univocal" cause. Sometimes, however, the perfection in the cause is not of the same kind as the perfection it

⁶ As we shall see later, in Chapter IX, there is only one First Cause, which is God.

⁷ As a completed being, the house depends on other causes for its being: the substances out of which it is made, its structure, the earth, and so on.

⁸ See Selected Passages, No. 20.

brings about. At times, the cause is only a mediate cause. For examples, we can take the remote general causes of particular effects, such as atmospheric pressure, gravitation, sunlight in relation to growth, and so on. Here, the unlikeness between the (remote) cause and its effect is largely due to the proximate causes which are between the remote cause and the ultimate effect. Such causes, which are not univocal because they are not the immediate causes of their effects, we shall call "equivocal causes." ⁸ Some causes, on the other hand, are somewhat unlike their effects because they act through knowledge: the bird is not identical in nature with its nest, the man is not of the same nature as the machine or the art work which he produces. A cause, which is somewhat unlike its effect because it causes through knowledge and not simply through nature, we shall call an "analogous cause." The kind of analog}' which is in question between an analogous cause and its effect shall be investigated below.

48. Types of agents: principal and instrumental causes

If I write *abc*, the fact that these are letters is due to me and not the pen. The power of the pen is to make ink marks when applied to paper, but the power to make letters is in me and not in the pen. Thus, we can distinguish two powers in the instrumental cause which are really distinct; the *natural* power which the instrument has of itself (a saw has power to cut, a typewriter to type, and so on), and the *instrumental* power which the instrument has from the principal agent.

There are two powers, but not two actions. In the working-together of principal and instrumental causes, for example, the writing of a letter, there is only one action and only one effect which is due to two causal factors. We can make a distinction of reason between the natural action of the instrument and the

* Most authors use the terms, "equivocal," "analogical," and "analogous," as equivalent terms when they speak of causes. St. Thomas uses the various terms indifferently. We have chosen to make a distinction in order to handle the cases more clearly.

instrumental action; or, in the effect, we can make a distinction of reason between what is due to the instrument as a natural being and what is due to the instrument as instrument.

We can consider the relation of principal cause to the instrument from the part of each one of them. The instrument limits and particularizes the action of the principal cause; thus I get different effects with a pen, a pencil, a brush. On the other hand, the instrument as such is not active of itself; it is caused to be a cause, it is "moved" by the principal cause to produce an effect.

N.B. Distinguish between an instrument in the strict sense which is moved to cause by the principal cause and the instrumental use or application of a natural cause. Compare the instrumentality of an engraver in using a tool and in using an acid to engrave a name on a piece of metal. A chemist, in producing synthetics, uses some instruments and also makes instrumental applications of the proper natural effects of chemicals.

There can be wide variation in the principal-instrumental relation. Compare the relationship of a man with a pen to the work produced and that of a man to the electrical calculator he uses. Many modern machines are extremely elaborate, and the nature of the effect is largely determined by the natural materials and the artificial structure of the machine: for example, the push-button machine which turns out automobile frames.

Here is a similarity between the conception, "instrumental cause," and the conception, "secondary cause." y In both there is a dependence upon another cause (or causes). The instrument, to the extent that it is merely an instrument, is a cause only inasmuch as it receives and transmits the causality of the principal cause. The only evident example of such a purely passive instrument is in the area of local motion. For example, when a person uses a stick to push a stone, the causality of the stick is purely received; it moves the stone only to the extent that it itself is caused to move the stone. In the relationship of the principal to

the instrumental cause we find this distinguishing trait: that the very causing of the instrument is received, not as a nature, not as a permanent possession (that is, by way of an inherent form), but as an essentially transient influence. The secondary cause, on the contrary, although it does depend on other causes so that without them it cannot cause, has a causality all its own and has a proper and positive influence. A secondary cause may need the co-operation of other causes; it may be moved to action by some other cause. But when it is moved to action, its causality is at least partly its own, an active expression of its own nature—although not exclusively so.

49. The exemplar cause

An intelligent agent engaged in the production of something has a more or less perfect knowledge of the thing he intends to make and directs his activity according to that knowledge. The object as known, according to which he directs activity, is called an “exemplar.” (A man may use an external model, as when a painter has a bowl of fruit in front of him which he is copying, but the external model is not directly a cause; it has influence only in so far as it is known.) An exemplar is a true cause because it does have an influence upon the being of the effect—not immediately but through the agent.

The type of causality of an exemplar is like that of *form*; that is, it specifies the effect. But instead of being the form of the effect directly and of itself, it is the form of the (intelligent) efficient cause. For this reason, the exemplar cause is sometimes called an “extrinsic formal cause.”

50. The theorem of causality¹⁰

So far we have been considering the causality which we directly experience, that is, where we experience both the coming-

“Most authors call this the “principle of causality.” Most of them then proceed to say that it is “self-evident” from the very analysis of the concepts or that it is deduced from the principle of sufficient reason, and so forth. These implications are historically attached to the term, “the principle

to-be of the patient and the activity of the agent. In still other words, we understand that some things as a matter of fact come to be in dependence upon an agent. Or again, we understand that some things pass from potency to act under the influence of an agent which is in act.

Now the question arises: Is this necessarily so? In other words, can something come-to-be, pass from potency to act, without the influence of any agent in act? As far as our everyday knowledge is concerned, we know that every case of coming-to-be has an efficient cause somewhere or other—things don't just happen. So, too, the whole of science proceeds on the implicit understanding that events and things have causes which determine them to be and that with sufficient patience, skill, and instruments, these causes can be discovered. But our question is: Is this implicit knowledge correct?

DIGRESSION ON NECESSITY

In general, that is necessary which cannot not-be. Necessity is the condition, state, or characteristic of a thing according to which it must be as it is and cannot not-be. Necessity is of various kinds: existential (if an existent cannot not-exist) or essential (if something must be as it is); intrinsic (if the necessity is rooted in the necessary being itself) or extrinsic (due to some other being).^{11†}

of causality," and so this text avoids using it. What we are talking about is a proposition of a very general and inclusive character, whose truth can be established beyond doubt. Such a proposition is called a "principle," "law," or "theorem." On the nature and treatment of causality in its general formulations, see Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., "The Causal Proposition," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXXII (1955).

"For convenience's sake, we will list some of the types of necessity, trying to point out the bases on which the various divisions are made. Necessities are:

(1) based on the source of the necessity, intrinsic (for example, acid necessarily reacts with certain metals) or extrinsic (a pencil moves necessarily as long as I, an efficient cause, am moving it).

(2) based on the scope of the necessity, absolute (under all conditions, a triangle must have three sides) or relative (exercise is necessary for a growing boy, but he can live without it).

(3) based on temporal or causal priority or posteriority in relation to

4 The opposite of necessity' is *contingence*, the possibility' of undergoing change, of being and not-being, and so forth. Note that necessity and contingency are not so opposed that a thing is either completely necessary or completely contingent. No thing is so completely' contingent that there are no necessities about it—the most contingent of beings and events has at least consequent necessity (now that it is, it cannot not-have-been) and some essential necessities (being what it is, while it is, it cannot not-be). On the other hand, though necessity as necessity is not contingent, there are some particular contingent necessities. For example, the necessity by which a nonfree agent acts is contingent upon its continued existence, the co-operation of other causes, and the like; something which is necessary with consequent necessity is contingent with regard to its antecedents; the essential necessities of limited beings are existentially contingent (for example, if a man is to be, he must be rational, he must possess an intellect and a will). The concrete copresence of both necessity and contingency in the same being is a point of great importance for this reason among others, that it shows how we can begin a necessary, demonstrative knowledge from contingent things.

BECOMING, CONTINGENCE, AND LIMITATION IN
RELATION TO CAUSALITY

Now, our question is: "Can something come-to-be without any' agent?" Note that something which comes-to-be does not have before its becoming the perfection which it later acquires but is only in potency' to it. Potency is ordered to act; but it is also and

the thing which is necessary, antecedent, or *de jure* (the actions of non-free agents are antecedently necessary because they flow from the nature which is causally prior to action) or consequent, or *de facto* (once Socrates is sitting, he sits necessarily [in virtue of the principle of contradiction]).

(4) based on the object of the necessity, logical (if the premises are true and correct, the conclusion must follow) or real (this event must come about if its necessary causes are actual).

(5) based on the objects of real necessity, essential (the essence of man necessarily makes him rational) or existential (God, Whose essence is identical with His act of existing, exists necessarily) or operational (any nonfree agent, like a dog or a chemical, necessarily performs its operations).

by its very nature distinct from act. It is not-act. To suppose that a being in potency can of itself acquire the act corresponding to that potency¹² is implicitly to deny any significant difference between potency and act; it is to suppose that potency is a kind of *hidden* act. But this is not true and not even really intelligible; it is an implicit contradiction. If potency is not the same as act, then any transition from potency to act takes place under the influence of an agent in act. From these considerations we derive our first general statement about causality: Anything which comes-to-be—which passes *from* potency to act—does so under the influence of an agent. This statement of causal dependence is first discovered in immediate experience and is known to be true without exception by an analysis of the beings themselves and their intrinsic constitution. Such a proposition, which depends on no outside evidence except on the intrinsic intelligibility¹³ of the being about which it is said, can be called “self-evident,” or “per se known.”¹⁴

Every thing which comes to be is existentially contingent; that is, of its nature or essence it is such that it can exist or not-exist. Hence, we can extend our question about causality to include those things about whose temporal origin we are ignorant. Let us suppose a being about which all we know is (a) that it does exist (for example, a pure spirit, or angel), and (b) that it is a

“Living things are said to “move themselves” (that is, from potency to act). This is by no means contrary to the causal dependence of things which change; for the living thing is not entirely in potency—it has its substantial act and its operative powers; moreover, many distinct causes (moisture, food, sunlight, and so forth) are necessary so that the living thing can continue to live and grow. See also, Selected Passages, No. 20, par. 1.

“Please note how I use term, “self-evident,” has been defined. Students sometimes think that “self-evident” means “evident to itself”; sometimes they think that a self-evident proposition is one that is explicitly known and admitted by all men—babies, barbarians, people who have never thought about it, and so on.

Philosophers have historically used the term “self-evident” in other senses; often, they have said that a self-evident proposition is known to be certain from an analysis of the concepts (and even of the terms!). There are some propositions which are known from an analysis of their concepts; the causal proposition is not one of them.

limited being. A limited being is a limited actuality. We have seen that an act is not limited of itself as act but can only be limited by a potency distinct from it by which it is limited. Hence, that which is limited as a being is composed of two really distinct principles in the order of being itself, namely, essence and the act of existing.

We can make some definite statements about the relation between essence and the act of existing in a being in which these principles are really distinct. First of all, since the act of existing is not a quiddity or form, it can never be a *part* of an essence. Secondly, *esse* cannot be the property of any essence. A property is an accident which inheres in a substance, is necessarily connected with that substance, and is a natural and necessary consequence thereof, as risibility is a natural and necessary consequence of the essence of man. Now, that which is a consequence of an essence is caused by that essence and is posterior to it in nature. For to be a cause, a thing must first exist in itself. An essence which is really distinct from its act of existing exists only by the possession of that act of existing. And the act of existing, inasmuch as it is an act, is prior in nature to its correlative potency. To suppose that *esse* is the property of an essence really distinct from it therefore involves a contradiction. Such an essence would be both prior and posterior to its own *esse* and would have to exist before it existed—it would have to exist in order to be a cause of *esse*; and *esse* would be before it existed, since it is by its act of existing that a thing is. Therefore, in a limited being, *esse* cannot be a property of the essence.

Two statements can therefore be made about the *esse* of a limited thing. First, *esse* is not the essence or a part of the essence of a limited thing. Secondly, *esse* is not a property of the essence of a limited thing.¹⁴ But *esse* is related to such an essence; this

¹⁴ Compare the statement of Bertrand Russell: "There does not even seem any logical necessity why there should be even one individual—why, in fact, there should be any world at all" (*Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* [London, 1924], p. 203).

relation is one of non-necessary, or contingent, possession. Esse is possessed as an act and, therefore, as prior to its receptive subject. Yet it is prior in such a way as not to be a thing in itself, nor to have the essence as its property or possession. The essence, although it is posterior to the esse, is necessarily the subject of that act. Hence, the esse, even as prior and as act, cannot be independent. It depends on something other than itself. The "something other" cannot be the essence of the limited thing itself, as we have just seen. Hence, in order that a *limited being* can be, it must depend on a cause. Hence, every limited being is existentially contingent, and every existentially contingent being depends on a cause.

This statement of causal dependence is a very inclusive statement. It includes and goes beyond the first statement of causal dependence, and it is proved true by a reasoning process based on act and potency and the analysis of an essence really distinct from its act of existing. Hence, this proposition may appropriately be called a "theorem."

51. The analogy of eminence in causality

In considering the types of efficient causality, we noted that there are both univocal and nonunivocal causes. Univocal causes belong to the same species as their effects, whereas nonunivocal causes do not. Nonunivocal causes are in some way unlike their effects.

We have also seen that a cause must be in some way like its effect. If a cause were totally unlike its effect, that cause would be acting according to some way in which it is not in act—and this would be contrary to the nature of an agent as it manifests itself: an agent acts inasmuch as it is itself in act. Hence, the non-univocal cause can be truly denominated from the perfection of which it is the cause. Since the cause does not possess the caused perfection univocally, it must possess either a different but equiv-

alent perfection” or a perfection which somehow includes the caused perfection though it is greater. In the former case, the analogy will be said to be “extrinsic”; in the latter, “intrinsic.” For example, the food which conserves the health of an animal is truly called “healthy.” But health, properly speaking, is a quality of a living thing; it can be the intrinsic modification only of a living thing. Therefore, the food—for example, a broiled steak—is not intrinsically healthy; yet it does have a relation to the health of a living man. For an example of intrinsic analogy, consider a bird building a nest. The bird does not have as its own intrinsic perfection the shape and structure which it gives to its effect, and so it must have some other perfection. We know that birds are beings capable of knowledge, and so we can see that the perfection, “having sensitive knowledge of a nest,” is intrinsic to the bird. A man, inventing a marvelously complicated machine, and not being such a machine by nature, must possess a similar perfection through which he can bring about the perfection in the patient upon which he acts. This perfection is intellectual knowledge, which includes in some way the perfection of what is known. Hence, we can truly and intrinsically speak of a “powerful idea,” a “mighty conception,” and so on. Conversely, we can call the effect by the perfection of the cause, and this is usually an extrinsic analogy; for example, we speak of a “clever gadget.”

We have seen earlier^{*} that there are two kinds of nonunivocal causes: analogous and equivocal. If we consider the two kinds of eminence in causality—intrinsic and extrinsic—we can see a cor-

“Electrical energy is equivalent to local motion, and an electric motor is precisely a machine for converting one kind of energy into another. Again, photosynthesis in plants turns solar energy into the locked-up energy of chemical combination. For another example—good meat contains such a mixture of chemical compounds that the animal which feeds on it can maintain itself in good health. For still another example: the two parents of a plant hybrid together contain the equivalent of the perfection of the hybrid offspring; polyploidy in plants can be brought about by the normal processes of cell division interfered with by high energy rays; the rays together with the normal processes of the parent cell are equivalent to the peculiar structure of the new cell.

^{*} See above, sec. 47.

respondent» between the kinds of causes and the kinds of causality. An analogous cause acts through knowledge and so need not have a *nature* univocally the same as its effect; nevertheless the knowledge is intrinsic to the cause and shows a nature more perfect than the nature of the effect. An equivocal cause acts by nature; it is a remote cause, and so its effect need not be of the same nature, since the nature of the effect may be determined by a proximate cause. The equivocal cause truly causes and so can truly be denominated from the effect, but the denominated nature is extrinsic to the cause.

Both kinds of eminence in causality are similar in this: that the basis of the “community” between cause and effect is causal influence and causal dependence. Hence, this analogy of eminence is more like the analogy of proportion than the analogy of proportionality.¹⁷ It is a single relationship of two terms, not a similarity of two proportions between two sets of terms. We can distinguish intrinsic analogy of eminence from the extrinsic by seeing whether the perfection of the cause is different and equivalent or similar and inclusive and therefore greater and intrinsic. Note that this distinction rests on some kind of knowledge of the cause in itself and its intrinsic perfections. If we merely know that *x* is the cause of some perfection and is a nonunivocal cause, we are unable to tell whether it is an equivocal or an analogous cause, and, consequently, we do not know whether the analogy is intrinsic or extrinsic.

52. Definitions

Active condition is that which removes a hindrance that prevents another agent from acting. (For example, an agent who opens a shutter is a condition of the sun's illumination of the room.)

Passive condition, or disposition, is a state or modification of a

¹⁷ See Selected Passages, No. 22.

For a comparison and classification of the various kinds of analogy, see below, sec. 108.

patient influencing an activity after the manner of a material cause. (For example, the general run-down condition of a sick person can influence the way in which the action of a medicine is received.)

Occasion is that which provides an opportunity for an agent's action without acting itself. (For example, an anniversary' celebration may be the occasion of a man's getting drunk.)

Cause is that which influences the act of existing of some thing.

Agent (or efficient cause) is that which by its activity influences the being of another. (For example, a sculptor)

Patient is that which is affected or being changed by another. (For example, marble)

Effect is that which is brought about by a cause. (For example, the statue)

Acting is the full intrinsic actuality of an operative power. (It is therefore a concrete, existential, and analogous act.)

Action (in the strict sense) is the change produced in a patient, considered as received from the agent. (For example, the taking-shape of the statue as brought about by the sculptor.)

Transient action is a more explicit term for action in the strict sense.

Passion is the change received from an agent, considered as taking place in the patient. (For example, the taking-shape of a statue under the influence of a sculptor, considered as a modification of the statue.)

Causality is the influence of the cause upon the effect.

Formal cause is the intrinsic principle of being which influences the being of the effect by communication of itself to the effect as the determining or specifying act. (For example, the soul of a living thing.)

Material cause is the intrinsic principle of being which influences the being of the effect by communication of itself to the effect as the subject and determinable, limiting factor. (For example, the body of a living thing.)

Efficient cause (or agent) is the extrinsic principle of being

which influences the being of the effect by its activity. (This is a more formal definition.)

A secondary cause is one which depends upon one or more causes for its being and its activity.

First cause is one which does not depend on other causes for its being or its activity.

Principal cause is a cause which acts by its own power and is a source of causality. (N.B. This does not exclude the possibility that a principal cause may be previously caused by another.)

Instrumental cause or instrument is a cause which acts by the power of the principal cause and only to the extent that it is moved by the principal cause.

An exemplar is an object known by an intelligent cause, according to which that intelligent cause directs his activity.

Necessity is that condition or qualification of a being by which it is (or is what it is) and cannot not-be.

Existential necessity is the necessity by which a being which is cannot not-be.

Essential necessity is the necessity by which a being is *what* it is.

Absolute essential necessity is the necessity by which it is simply impossible that a being be otherwise than it is, and is based on the real identity of an essence with itself.

Relative essential necessity (physical or natural necessity) is the necessity by which distinct properties or activities are linked to the essence from which they flow and is based on formal causality.

Contingence is the condition or qualification of a being by which it can be otherwise than it is.

Univocal cause is one which belongs to the same species as its effect. (For example, a heater and the thing heated)

Analogous cause (in the strict sense) is one which does not belong to the same species as its effect but intrinsically possesses a perfection which includes and goes beyond the perfection of its effect. (For example, a man, possessing intellectual knowledge

[the greater and more inclusive perfection] causes a structure in a collection of material things [a perfection of a different kind]). (In the wide sense, analogous cause and equivocal cause are used interchangeably.)

Equivocal cause (in the strict sense) is one which does not belong to the same species as its effect but possesses a different and equivalent perfection. (Healthy food, as cause of the health of an animal)

Analogy of eminence in causality is an analogy based on causal dependence of an effect on its nonunivocal cause, involving a true attribution of the perfection of the effect to the cause, in a higher, greater, or "eminent" sense. The analogy' is intrinsic if the cause is strictly analogous; extrinsic, if the cause is equivocal. (Conversely, the perfection of the cause can be truly attributed to the effect in an imperfect or lesser sense, and this perfection, too, can be either intrinsic or extrinsic.)

53. Proofs (to be developed)

- A. Whatever comes to be has a cause.
- B. Whatever exists contingently has a cause.
- C. No effect can be greater than its total cause.

54. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, Bk. II, chap. 21 (proportion between cause and effect); Bk. III, chap. 21 (tendency), chap. 69 (that creatures are truly causes of esse); *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. III, q. 19, art. 1, par. 2 (distinction between instrument and instrumental use of a natural cause), q. 62, art. 1, last par. (distinction between principal and instrumental cause); Pt. I, q. 54, arts. 1-3 (a very important series of texts on being, substance, esse, acting, and power), q. 104, art. 1 (a difficult but very important text on the difference between the cause of coming-to-be and the cause of being).

Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. IV, chaps. 1-2, 1013a-1014a24 (on principles and causes).

Francis L. Hannon, *Principles of Psychology*, rev. ed. (Milwaukee, Bruce, 1951), pp. 202-204; a brief summary' of the work of Michotte on the perception of causality.

Robert O. Johann, S.J., "A Comment on Secondary Causality," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXV (1947), 19-25.

John Wild, "A Realistic Defense of Causal Efficacy," *Review of Metaphysics*, II (1949), 1-14.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

20. *Kinds of Agents and Patients*

Those artifacts which have such a nature [that is, one to lie produced by art], as stones are the matter of a house, cannot be changed by themselves, for it is impossible that they be changed except by another. And this principle is true, not only in artifacts, but in natural things. For in this way the matter of fire cannot be changed to fire except by another. And hence it is that the form of fire is not generated except by another. . . .

Hence, it must be said that only living things are found to move themselves locally, but other things are moved by an exterior principle, either that which generates them, or that which removes a preventing condition, as is said in the eighth book of the *Physics*; so, too, only living things are found to change themselves according to the other kinds of change. This is because they are found to have different parts, one of which can be the agent, and the other the patient, and this is the situation which obtains in everything which moves itself, as is proved in the eighth book of the *Physics*. . . .

It is about such matter having in itself an active principle that the Philosopher is speaking here, and not about inanimate things. This is clear from the fact that he compares the matter of fire to the matter of a house in this regard, that both are moved to the form by an extrinsic agent. Yet it does not follow that the generation of inanimate tilings is not natural. For it is not necessary for natural change, that the principle of motion in that which is moved be an active and formal principle; sometimes it is passive and material. . . .

He had said above that everything which is generated is generated by something like it in species. But this is not the same in all cases, and so he intends here to show how this is found in different cases. . . . Everything which is generated from something, is generated from it per se, or per accidens. But what is generated from another per accidens, is not generated from it according as it is such as it is, and so it is not necessary that in the generator there is the likeness of that which is generated. Thus, the finding of a treasure has no likeness in him who, digging in order to plant, finds the treasure accidentally. But the per se generator, generates such as it itself is, as a generator. And so it is necessary that in a per se generator the likeness of the generated must be in some way.

But this comes about in three ways. In one way, the form of the

generated pre-exists in the generator according to the same way of being, and in similar matter, as fire generates fire, or man generates a man. This is wholly univocal generation.

In another way, the form of the generated pre-exists in the generator, not according to the same way of being, nor in a substance of the same kind. Thus, the form of the house pre-exists in the builder, not according to its material mode of being, but according to an immaterial mode of being, which it has in the mind of the builder, but not in the stones and wood. This generation is partly univocal, as far as the form is concerned, partly equivocal, as far as the mode of being of the form in the subject is concerned.

In the third way, the whole form of the generated does not pre-exist in the generator, but some "part" of it, or some part of a part, as in hot medicine there pre-exists the warmth which is a part of health, or is something leading to a part of health. And this generation is in no way univocal.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. VII, lect. 8
(ed. Cathala, Nos. 1440,
1442e, 1442z, 1444-1446).*

21. Difference between Principal and Instrumental Causes

For a principal agent acts according to the requirements of its own form, and so the active power in it is some form or quality having complete reality according to its own nature. But an instrument acts inasmuch as it is moved by another. Hence, it has a power proportioned to this motion. But motion is not a complete being, but it is a way to being, as it were something between pure potency and pure act, as is said in the third book of the *Physics*. And so the power of an instrument inasmuch as it is an instrument, according as it acts to produce an effect beyond that which is proportioned to it according to its nature, is not a complete reality having a fixed being in its nature, but an incomplete reality (like the power of affecting sight which is in the air inasmuch as it is an instrument moved by an exterior visible thing).

*Commentary on the Fourth
Book of the Sentences, dis. 1,
q. 1, art. 4, qa. 1.*

22. Analogy of Proportion Compared to the Analogy of Eminence in Causality

The creator and the creature are reduced to one, with a community, not of univocation, but of analogy. This latter community can be of two kinds. It can consist in this, that several things participate in one

thing according to priority and posteriority, as potency and act participate in being, and, similarly, substance and accident. Or this community can consist in this, that one receives its esse and its essence from the other, and this is the analog}' of the creature to the creator. For the creature does not have an act of existing except inasmuch as it has come from the First Being; consequently, it is not called being except inasmuch as it imitates the First Being.

*Commentary on the First Book
of the Sentences, prologue, q.
1, art. 2, ad 2.*

CHAPTER VIII

The Extrinsic Principles of Being:

II The Goal of Action

55. The goal of action

So far, in our analysis of change and being, we have considered the material, formal, and efficient causes of becoming and being. Are these three causal factors sufficient? Or, at least in some cases, is it still possible and meaningful to ask, "Why?" For example, when we know who did this, what he did, and to whom he did it, are we satisfied that we fully understand the action? When we ask, "Why?" do we not want to find out the *reason* or cause, which is, in the context, the purpose or motive of the action? In other words, when we have found material, formal, and efficient causes, we still have not discovered the full intelligibility of action and causality.

An inspection of various kinds of beings shows us that they have various kinds of activity; they are either conscious beings or beings without knowledge. We will consider each kind in turn.

A. ACTIONS WHOSE RESULTS ARE FORESEEN AND DESIRED

In the case of our own activities, we find that we often know, or at least think we know, the results of our transient actions. What is more important, we find ourselves wanting, desiring, choosing these results either for themselves or as a means to something else, and so we go on to perform those actions. For example, a man may want the money he can earn by his work, or he may want the product itself. In the former case, we speak of "the end of the agent"; in the latter, of "the end of the activity

(or work)"—though the latter is also desired as an end by the agent. In both cases, the end is foreseen and desired by the agent.

We also often foresee and want our own vital activities for their own sake. For example, a student may want to know something, and the knowledge itself is the end which he foresees and desires. Again, a man may want to travel in order to *see* and *experience* for himself the scenes or the customs of different countries. In these cases, the action itself is an end which is foreseen and desired.

An end which is foreseen and desired is called a "purpose." A purpose is a real cause of action, for it influences the coming to be of something, either a product or an immanent activity. A purpose is by no means an efficient cause; it does not act. People sometimes think that an efficient cause pushes an object, and a final cause "attracts" or "pulls" it. Pulling is as much an efficiency as pushing, but we have to use some words to express the causality of a purpose, and these words are applied to purpose by an analogy with efficient causes. So, when we say that "A purpose moves an agent, or directs or influences him," we are understanding this of an influence which is not an efficiency. A purpose, then, causes by directing an agent to make actual that which is preconceived and desired. This direction to a goal we call "finalization." An intellectually knowing agent is finalized by the knowledge it has of a goal (or end) to be made or gained.¹

In the activities of brute animals, there is also some evidence of some foreknowledge and desire of ends. Certainly, we do not have the same kind of evidence that we find in ourselves. But there is some; a hungry dog, for example, goes hunting for food. The dog does not know that it has a *purpose* as such; it only knows that it is hungry, that food will satisfy that hunger, and

¹ An end that is to be made is, for example, a picture to be painted, a house to be built. An end that is to be gained is, for example, a house or a field or an automobile to be acquired. In the second case, the end already exists, but *not as possessed* by the agent, and it is as an end *to be possessed* that it moves the agent to act.

that food can be found by looking for it. When we want to know why a particular dog is hunting, we are satisfied when we know that it is looking *for food*. (In saying this, we are intellectualizing the brute's activity; the brute doesn't think of an end; it imagines and desires food, and we understand that this foreknowledge of food is as a matter of fact a knowledge of an end.) The brute's activity of hunting is finalized by its knowledge of the sensible object. This sensible object is not known precisely as *end*, but it is known concretely and in the particular as something to be gained or avoided. Hence, we can speak also of the purposive activity of animals. A sensitively knowing agent is finalized by the knowledge it has of a sensible object (which is a goal) to be gained or avoided.

What exactly is the function of a purpose, that is, a consciously held goal? We want to know this, because from an analysis of our own purposive activity we can understand what is meant by the terms, "end," "goal," "final cause." A purpose is obviously not one of the intrinsic causes or principles of our being, like matter and form or essence and the act of existing. First and foremost, a purpose is concerned with activity. How does purpose function in connection with activity? It is clearly *not* another efficient cause, for a known goal, as such, is not a real being and so has no activity in the strict sense of that word. We can see still more clearly the function of purpose if we compare it with an exemplar cause. The exemplar causes by way of specifying some type of activity, but only conditionally; that is, if there is to be activity, it will be of such-and-such kind, as specified by the exemplar. But a purpose, as such, "moves" the agent to act; it is a determinant of *action* simply, and only secondarily of action of this or that *kind*. It functions as the correlative object of tendency (that is, of desiring, wanting, and so forth). From this analysis, the conclusion emerges: a goal is that principle which influences the coming-to-be of an effect inasmuch as by being the object of tendency it influences the agent.

B. NATURAL ACTIVITY

There is not much difficulty in establishing the finalization of activity which flows from knowledge. But are other activities finalized? For there are many activities which do not flow from knowledge: the activities of nonliving things and of plants, and those actions in men and animals which do not flow from knowledge (such as digestion, growth, regeneration of tissue, reflex actions, and sleep²). All such activities are called "natural activities." Clearly we cannot say that such actions are purposive in the sense that they proceed from the agent's own conscious knowledge. But can we in any sense speak of finalization of these natural activities?

To help us see that this is a good question we can reflect that in some fields of natural activity we distinguish between a normal or natural result and a defective result. This is particularly the case in the generation of living things: plants, animals, and men are sometimes born defective in one way or another. The natural processes of generation tend to normal results; if we did not at least vaguely apprehend this tendency, we would never talk of monsters or of healthy, full-formed births. A somewhat similar indication can be found in some extremely complicated processes of nonliving things, for example, in the formation of crystals. Sometimes there are "defective" crystals, which occur when the natural processes do not altogether succeed in reaching their goal.

This vague indication of goal-directedness needs to be carefully explored and analyzed. Suppose we begin with the activities

²Note that finality is properly a characteristic of *action*. In the classic example of the archer and the arrow, the arrow in flight has a direction or end temporarily imposed upon it—by the archer. Strictly, the arrow has no intrinsic finality for the target, or even for any local motion. Modern thinkers point out that local motion has no end of itself—and that is true, for they are considering the thing which moves locally (that is, the thing which is *moved*). But finality is to be sought in the *agent*, not in the patient. This caution must be kept in mind throughout.

of living things without knowledge (and with similar activities performed by agents which possess knowledge, but not as guides of these activities). For example, a tree's roots push through the ground to find water. A tree growing in wet ground will have a relatively shallow root system, whereas the same variety' of tree growing in a dry spot will send its roots much deeper. The sprouting seed pushes through even hard ground to get to sunlight. The tendrils of a vine wind around supports to hold the vine upright. Certain plants turn their flowers or leaves with the apparent motion of the sun to get more sunlight. What do these various activities show us? First of all, we see that a distinct result *is reached*: some new being or some new effect is attained. Secondly, we see in living things a tendency, an impulse, a dynamism *toward* these results. Even before the results are reached, there is an orientation of the activity toward them. Vital activity is in fact goal-directed.

The analysis of the activity of nonliving things is more difficult than that of living things, and so our investigation will have to proceed more slowly. In the first place, nonvital activities do reach results. This fact is so obvious as not to need further explanation. Secondly, the results of nonvital activities are consistent results. Of course, there is not an absolute invariability of action and result. But there is a definite *constancy*, within limits, so much so that physicists and chemists can construct mathematical formulas for these activities, and so much so that in the past two generations entire industries have been built on the exact, universal knowledge acquired by scientists. Now, what does the constancy of nonvital activities show us? It shows us that nonliving things are, in a real sense, sources of activity. They are not independent sources, it is true; other surrounding things are necessary and frequently energy must be supplied. Nonliving things, therefore, are real, secondary causes. Furthermore, these nonliving things are intrinsically determined to their activities. If this were not so, they would be determined entirely by circumstances, and constancy would vanish. Therefore, nonliving things

have some intrinsic principle of determination to their proper activities. Proximately, this principle is the power by which they act; ultimately, the determination is from the substantial form, by which each one of these things has its own given nature.

The result of this investigation can be summarized briefly: nonliving things, as agents, are intrinsically determined to some definite activities that have constant results. Now, we must ask a further question: "Are nonliving things determined to act, as well as to the kind of action?" "Or are they, on the contrary, pure instruments which cause only as long as they are being made-to-cause by another cause?" It must be admitted at once that there is much passivity in nonliving things. It was suggested above that local motion is a passion of the thing which moves rather than an action. It should also be admitted that in some cases we do not know very much about the activity of nonliving things. But there seem to be some clear cases of real activity. When energy is released through chemical action—for example, when phosphorus combines with oxygen—the material things themselves seem to be active, not merely to be moved like instruments. At some time in the past, energy was put in; but tin's merely means that such agents are caused causes, or, in other words, secondary causes. Again, there are activities like those of radium, which are quite clearly cases of activity that is not merely instrumental. By carrying this induction further, enough examples could be found to enable us to conclude that nonliving things are truly agents and of themselves tend to act, even if their agency or efficiency is a very limited one.³

³ Another way of discovering the goal-directedness of nonvital activity is by examining the activity itself. Many complex natural activities take time and occur in a series of distinguishable steps, which have an intrinsic relation to the results which they bring about. Modern chemistry finds it quite practical to determine, from a consideration of the product that is wanted (for example, a plastic of a certain hardness or resilience), the required materials and the various stages and order of production. The order of natural process is more strikingly evident when the activity of one agent is interfered with by that of another, although it can perhaps be found even in simpler activities.

If there were no agents, there would be no need for goals of action. For example, from the "point of view" of the lumber, the coming-to-be of a table is in no sense a goal. This is because the lumber is wholly passive in regard to the becoming of the table. But an agent is precisely in some sense or other *active*, and that means having a tendency and an impetus toward something. Since there cannot be an impetus which is not an impetus toward something, every action has a goal. Similarly, material things as such are purely passive in regard to their own local motion. As such, they are indifferent or "free" to move in any direction, and so there is no finality in local motion if we consider only that which moves. But from the point of view of that which moves it, that is, the agent (whether the agent moves by contact or gravitation), local motion does have a direction and, consequently, is finalized.

We can now summarize the results of our investigation of the activity of nonliving things. Nonliving things, to the extent that they are agents, are intrinsically determined to some definite activities which have constant results and also intrinsically tend to perform these activities.

C. THE CAUSAL ANALYSIS OF ACTIVITY

In studying activity, we must try to see it as a whole and try⁷ to account for all its aspects. It is possible, and legitimate for certain purposes, to consider activity abstractly. But, in the philosophy of being, an abstract consideration is seen to be only a partial one. Just as being is considered concretely and as a whole, so, too, activity must be considered concretely and as a whole.

In Chapter V, we studied the intrinsic principles by which being is constituted and by which change is possible. The intrinsic principles of being are concerned with the being itself. As causal factors, they bring about the being in which they are. They determine, specify, or structure a being in relation to itself. For example, the form is that by which a being is what *it* is substantially, and the form brings with it certain properties (namely,

accidents) which perfect that being *itself*. So, too, the act of existing is that by which a being *itself* exists. By understanding these principles, we can understand how change is possible. But, so far, we cannot say *that* change is actually taking place; nor can we exactly decide *what* the effect will be.

Hence, in Chapter VII, we discovered that change demands an extrinsic principle, the agent, by which the passive potencies of beings are actualized. Given that there is an agent with its tendencies (active powers), we can understand (1) that change actually occurs,⁴ and (2) what the effect will concretely be;³ and so we can have a full understanding of the coming-to-be of contingent things. "Given that there is an agent," we can understand activity. But why should any being be an agent? Why should any being be endowed with active and operative powers that are tendencies toward new actuality?

Here, the analysis of human purpose activity shows us a fourth causal factor, the end or goal, on account of which an agent acts. We need to investigate this factor further, both in transient and in immanent activity.

In transient activity, the direction of efficient causality is toward the patient which, as such, is distinct from the agent. Transient activity is an impulse toward a new being which does not yet exist but is to come into being through that activity.⁶ The fact that causality is directed toward the *esse* of another, namely, of the effect, requires a causal factor over and above the principles by which a being is constituted. And since the production of a distinct effect is found in all transient activity, we can truly say that every agent, as principle of transient activity, acts for a goal or end.

Living things have immanent activities, and immanent activity is, as such, the perfection of the agent which acts immanently.

⁴ See above, Chap. VI, sec. 41.

⁶ See above, Chap. VII, sec. 46.

* Hence, the nature of a being which has only transient activity is profoundly different from one which has properly immanent action; see sec. 61.

Plants bring themselves to their perfection by the immanent activities of growth and nourishment and the immanent aspect of generative activity. Animals and men perfect themselves by exercising their powers of knowledge and appetition. These activities are either desired for what they bring to the agent (and so are finalized by a further end) or they are sought and valued for themselves, in other words, are themselves goals (for example, games, which are "for" nothing else, the contemplation of truth, the exercise of sympathy, love, and so forth).

Sometimes, it is true, we speak of "aimless activities"; what we mean is that where we expect a conscious purpose there is none. For example, semiautomatic actions, like scratching one's head or drumming one's fingers, are said to be aimless because they are activities which ordinarily flow from a conscious purpose. But here the purpose is not conscious, or perhaps the goal is not a humanly desirable one—but there is a goal nonetheless. In the explanation of immanent activity, therefore, the intrinsic principles explain what a thing is, and how it is possible for it to acquire further perfections. The thing in its substantial perfection itself is the agent which brings about the accidental perfection of immanent activity; but that the agent should act at all, is the precise function of the end (goal, final cause).⁷ Consequently, for both immanent and transient activity, the end is the reason (cause) why the agent acts. In a word, every agent, no matter what its type of activity, acts for an end.⁸

How is an agent finalized? An agent which has knowledge (sensor)' or rational) is finalized by the object known, toward

⁷ For a clear analysis of the causality of the end and the mutual influence of the four causes on each other, see *Selected Passage*, No. 23.

•This proposition is often called "the principle of finality."

* Previously it has been pointed out (sec. 39, n. 2, and sec. 46, n. 3) that the passivity of a potency is not necessarily always passivity to the reception of an influence from an efficient cause. The fallacy of univocity in the explanation of the passivity of tendencies to their final causes has led to very elaborate theories which the very simple and direct understanding of the analogy of potency makes useless and superfluous. This remark concerns chiefly the theory of powers in the philosophy of human nature and the theory of premotion in natural theology.

which it tends by its conscious appetite. An agent which does not have knowledge is finalized by its nature (ultimately by its substantial form, proximately by the active powers which are the properties of that form; by these powers the agent is adapted to its ends). How can a substantial form be a formal cause and, at the same time, a principle of finality, of goal-directedness? (This is an important question which cannot be answered at this point.)¹⁰

56. Finality in being

In the ver>' intelligibility of the act-potency correlation we have a manifestation of finality. For a being in potency is a being ordered to an act or perfection. For example, essence is ordered to the act of existing by its very nature and so is intrinsically finalized. The same is true of the other instances of the act-potency correlation; matter is ordered to form, is "for" form; substance is "for" accidents. And all the beings which we know directly exist for their operations. In other words, not only is it true that all the agents we know directly act for ends but also, because there are ends,¹¹ these agents necessarily act (with different kinds of necessity depending on their natures).

But as we have seen before, there are two basic types of operation, immanent and transient activity. Immanent activity, as we have also seen, is the perfection of the agent, and so an agent with immanent activity has an internal goal: it acts for its own good, in some sense at least, and so, to that same extent, exists proximately for its own sake. This is least perfectly true of merely vegetative living things, for their highest operation, generation, is ultimately ordered to the production of a distinct living thing. It is more perfectly verified in animals, which have sensitive knowledge; but sensitive knowledge is very limited, as we shall see in the philosophy of human nature. It is most per-

^wSee below, sec. 69.

^uRecall that as was explained above in n. I, some ends already exist and need only to be obtained; other ends must be produced.

factly verified in intellectual beings, whose immediate end is their own perfection, to be attained by the possession of the good which is the completion of their nature.¹²

On the Contran-, beings which have only transient activities cannot be said to be for themselves. Their being is for the sake of their effects; in other words, their goals are wholly external. They share in activity only to the extent that they bring other things to perfection. That is why some philosophers have found only an extrinsic or instrumental finality in nonliving things; for example, that they serve the ends and purposes of men, animals, and plants. But this is a confusion. Nonliving things have an intrinsic principle of finality, their nature, but their goals are always external.

57. Chance

The term "chance" is often used loosely to indicate that we do not know the efficient causes or agents of a particular event (coming-to-be). But if someone is ignorant of the causes of an event, or even if the event cannot be foreseen (foreknown), there is no philosophical problem about reality involved. For example, ignorance may keep a person from knowing what a gun is, but when such an ignorant person pulls the trigger and the gun fires, the firing of the bullet is not chance. Again, we may not be able to tell which way the dice will fall, but the *chance* we take is our ignorance, not the absence of causes for the event.

Some philosophers have taken the position that some events happen without efficient causes. Of course, they admit that within our immediate experience causes are always to be found and to be expected. But for various reasons (some of which shall be considered in the next chapter¹³), these philosophers maintain that some events remote in time or space occur without efficient causes, and they state this supposed situation by saying

"As we shall see in moral philosophy, the end of man is the possession of the subsistent truth (for knowledge) and goodness (for appetite), which is God.

^u See below, sec. 62.

that these events happen "by chance." Note that this is no explanation. If, with these philosophers we would say, "Chance is tile coming-to-be of some event without an efficient cause," then the statement, "An event has happened by chance," means, "An event has happened by the coming-to-be of that event without an efficient cause." This is the same as saying that something comes to be without a cause. And, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, every being which comes to be has a cause.

However, there is another meaning of the term "chance" which does offer a philosophical problem. We call that chance which happens without design or expectation. For example, a man in spading his garden comes upon a hidden treasure: we say he found it by chance. The miser who hid the treasure had the purpose of concealing or safeguarding it, not the purpose of having it found. The man who was spading his garden had no purpose of finding a treasure. Or another case: a man on his way to the store met a robber at an alley; the meeting of the two men was chance. What happens in such a case? There is a meeting of two lines of causality, each of which is purposive in itself, but the meeting of the two lines is not included in the purpose of either agent. In this sense of chance, all accidents are chance. In this sense also, we can correctly speak of chance even in the world below man. The stone on top of the mountain is pulled by gravity, which is a goal-directed activity, toward the bottom. A plant halfway up is engaged in the goal-directed activity of growing and nourishing itself. But the destruction of the plant by the descending stone is not due either to the causes which pull the stone down or to the activity of the plant; it is a chance result due to the interference of two lines of activity. For another example, we know that when molten iron cools without interference, it takes a crystalline structure which is relatively brittle. When it is violently pounded while cooling, it becomes tough and malleable. From the point of view of either the iron itself or the forge, the malleability of the iron is a chance result due to the interference of two unconnected lines of activity. Hence, we can

define chance as "the concurrence or interference of several causal chains,¹⁴ such that the concurrence is outside the goal of any of the causes taken singly."

Chance, considered from the viewpoint of the agents immediately involved, is certainly something real. Because this consideration is restricted to the immediate or proximate agents, we will call chance taken in this way "relative chance." But this is not the only way in which we can consider chance, as is clear from the example of the iron and the forge, for what is chance from the viewpoint of either of those causes is intended by the operator of the forge. If, then, we take into account all the causes involved in an event, both proximate and remote (or mediate) secondary¹⁵ causes, we would have a complete and absolute consideration, so that, if a chance event occurred with respect to all these causes, it would be an absolute chance.

Can there be an absolutely chance event or effect? To answer this question we must first distinguish between a positive chance and a merely destructive one. Most chance events are less perfect (less actual, and so on) than the effects which the causes would have produced if they had not been interfered with. With such an event there is really no problem of causality and finality.¹⁶ But what about positive chance results? Let us suppose an effect arising from an interference of distinct causal lines, which is more perfect than any single one of its proximate causes.¹⁷ When we were considering efficient causality, we saw

" Recall that natural finality or deliberate purpose will be finalizing each one of these lines of causality in itself.

¹⁴ On the meaning of the term, "secondary cause," see above, sec. 47.

¹⁵ Imperfection, or Jack of act, does not need an efficient cause, since as such it is *not*. Supposing that God exists (which we have not yet considered philosophically): such a destructive result would indeed fall under His foreknowledge and providence and could not happen unless He permitted it; yet He would not be its cause.

¹⁶ To the extent that more perfect living things were born of less perfect ones their origin would be ascribed to chance. How a nature can arise in this way will be considered in general below, sec. 69, and more specifically in the philosophy of nature; see G. P. Klubertanz, *Philosophy of Human Nature* (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1953), pp. 405-407; 422-425; "Chance and Equivocal Causality," *Proceedings of the XIth International*

that an effect may possibly be more perfect, more actual, of a higher degree of being than any one of its proximate causes, but not more so than all of its causes taken together, else it would be really uncaused. The situation with regard to final causes is not altogether the same. A positive effect may well escape the finality of any of the proximate and particular causes and so be a relatively chance effect. Moreover, granted a real plurality' of contingent beings, and granted especially the real internal freedom of some finite agents, a positive chance effect may escape the finality' of any and all secondary causes.¹⁸ Is this a sufficient and complete analysis? If we were to say that an event or a being in its coming-to-be has escaped the finality of every cause without any qualification at all, would we not be forced to hold that the determinate nature of the effect has been simply uncaused? Would this not be a contradiction? For we would hold that this determinate nature would be actual of itself and yet have begun to be. This problem brings us to the topic of the next chapter.

58. Definitions

Goal, end, or final cause, is that to which an activity' is directed. It is that for the sake of which something exists or is done. It is the cause which influences the being of an effect by being the object of an agent's tendency'.

Purpose is a *consciously held* goal.

Finalization is the being-directed toward a goal.

Finality is the being-ordered or directed toward something which is a good or perfection in some sense.

Chance is the concurrence or interference of several causal

Congress of Philosophy, VI (1953), 203-208. This article also shows how the statistical character of some scientific laws is to be related to both efficiency and finality.

* To suppose the opposite is to admit mechanical predetermination. Such a system of thought would hold that a sufficiently powerful intellect (for example, Laplace's demon), given an adequate knowledge of any moment of world history, could discover all the events which led up to it and predict all subsequent events.

chains, such that the concurrence is outside the goal of any of the causes taken singly.

Relative chance is the concurrence of several causal chains which is outside the finality' of the proximate causes involved.

Absolute chance is the concurrence of several causal chains which is outside the finality of all secondary causes.

59. Proof

Action is either immanent or transient.

But: immanent action is itself a perfection of the agent and so an end or goal; transient action flows either from a conscious purpose or from a nature so structured as to act toward constant and determined results.

Therefore: every' agent acts for an end.

60. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Contra Gentiles*, Bk. III, chaps. 2 and 3 (every agent acts for an end which is a good), chap. 16 (every limited being has a goal); *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 5, art. 4 (how the causes are related); q. 44, art. 4 (God is the end of all beings); Pt. I-II, q. 1, arts. 1 and 2 (finality in human activity'), q. 26, art. 1 (love and the good).

Etienne Gilson, *The Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (New York, Scribner, 1936), pp. 102-107.

A. D. Sertillanges, *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy*, trans. Godfrey Anstruther (St. Louis, Herder, 1931), pp. 148-158.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

23. *That the End Is a Cause*

The fourth kind of cause is the goal (end). This is that for the sake of which something happens, as health is the cause of walking. Because it is less evident that the end is a cause, since it is the last to come to be, therefore also was it omitted from consideration by earlier philosophers, as is noted in the first book. Hence, [Aristotle] proves in a special manner that the end is a cause. For the question, "Why?" or "On what account?" is a question about a cause. For when someone asks us, "Why, or for what reason, is someone walking?" we give a suitable answer when we say, "For his health." And in answering this way, we think we are giving the cause. Hence it is clear that the end

is a cause. Not only the ultimate end for which the agent acts is a cause with regard to those things which precede it, but all the intermediate steps between the first agent and the ultimate end are called ends with regard to what precedes them. In the same way, the intermediaries are called the agent cause and source of motion with regard to what follows them. . . .

Since the term *cause* has many meanings, it happens that there are many causes of one thing, not accidentally, but properly. . . . For the cause of the statue, in itself and not accidentally, is the sculptor and the brass, but not in the same way. . . .

He says that it also happens that two things are causes with regard to each other—but this is impossible in the same kind of causality. This indeed becomes clear if we consider that causes are of many kinds. For example, the pain from a wound is a cause of health, as efficient cause or the principle of change; but health is a cause of that pain, as end. For according to one and the same kind of causality it is impossible that one thing be both cause and caused. . . .

We ought to understand that, of the four kinds of causes previously mentioned, two of them correspond to each other, and the other two also. For the efficient cause and the end correspond to each other, in that the efficient cause is the principle of change, and the end is its term. Similarly, matter and form correspond to each other, for the form gives *esse*, but the matter receives it. Therefore, the efficient cause is the cause of the end, and the end is the cause of the efficient cause. The efficient cause is the cause of the end, inasmuch as it makes it to be, because by bringing about change, the efficient cause makes the end exist. But the end is a cause of the efficient cause, not indeed of its being, but with regard to its causality. For the efficient cause is a cause inasmuch as it acts, and it does not act except for the sake of an end. Therefore, the efficient cause has its causality from the end.

Form and matter are causes of being with regard to each other. Form is the cause of matter, inasmuch as it makes the latter to be in act; but matter is the cause of form, inasmuch as it sustains it. But I say that both of these are causes of being for each other, either simply or in some regard. For the substantial form gives being to matter simply. But the accidental form does so in a qualified manner, inasmuch as it too is a form. Furthermore, the matter does not always sustain the form in being simply, but inasmuch as the form is the form of this matter, having its being in it, as the human body is related to the human soul.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. V, lect.
2 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 771,
773, 774-775).*

CHAPTER IX

God, the Cause of Limited Being

61. The problem¹

In studying the being and action of things around us, we have found certain structures and characteristics that are analogously common to all of them. We have seen that every being of our experience is something that has an act of existing, that it is consequently a limited being, and that it is therefore existentially contingent.² In studying the action and causality of these beings which are limited, we have seen that every one of them is a secondary cause. In other words, the very action and causality of these beings is dependent in one way or another on other distinct beings, and that in the two directions of efficiency and finality.³ The question now arises: "Is all reality of this same nature and structure?" "Or, as most men hold, is there a being or beings of quite a different sort, commonly called by them God?"

This question is complicated by a difficulty⁴ raised by some recent philosophers. They want to know how anyone could claim to know a reality which was allegedly outside experience. Of course, we can think of many things which we have never

¹It was explained above (sec. 2) that metaphysics and natural theology are not two distinct philosophical disciplines. A complete metaphysics, in fact, includes natural theology. For purposes of learning, some division has to be introduced, and so in this introductory study of being, we intend to take up only enough about the first principle of experienced being to make the latter intelligible to ourselves. In a sense, of course, the whole of natural theology is contained in the proofs for God's existence. But it still needs to be unfolded. So, after a student has completed the introductory course in metaphysics, natural theology⁵ will still provide a challenge to his thinking and learning.

² Above, secs. 10, 20, 34, 41 (3), and 50.

³ Above, secs. 46, 47, 50, 55, and 57.

experienced, but it is maintained that all such "things" are either possible material things (like the spaceship not yet built) or simply unreal objects (like the chimera or the objects of mathematics). The question then is: "How do we come to know real tilings of which we have no immediate experience?"

Furthermore, some people assert that there is evidence to show that there is no God. They allege, and rightly, that almost all who accept the existence of God agree that He is good. How, they ask, can a good God be the source of imperfection, suffering, evil, and sin? Are not evil and disorder evidences that the world did not proceed from an all-good source?

62. Solutions

In general, all who accept the existence of God in any way, are called "theists." Conversely, those who do not, are called "atheists."⁴ More accurately, an atheist is one who denies that there is a distinct intelligent cause of the material universe. Usually, an atheist also has some positive doctrine about the ultimate nature of reality. Most atheists are materialists of one sort or another.

Materialism is the doctrine that only mass and motion are ultimately real, or that matter is the only substance. Mechanism, which is now almost entirely obsolete, held that all activity in the universe could be reduced to mass and motion.⁵ Modern

* On atheism, see the very illuminating study by Jacques Maritain, "The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism," *The Range of Reason* (New York, Scribner's, 1952), pp. 103-120. For a more extended and literary treatment, see Henri de Lubac, S.J., *The Drama of Atheistic Humanism* (New York, Sheed and Ward, 1949).

⁶ The term, "reduce," has a special meaning in the area of knowledge. We say that A can be reduced to B when B is shown to give us the essential intelligibility of A. Thus, by means of the parallelogram of forces, two forces acting at an angle to each other can be shown to be equivalent to a single force, and the direction and speed of the motion deduced. Similarly, complex motions can be reduced to a series of simple motions. In this way, too, materialists would like to be able to show that vital activity is only an enormously complicated series of physicochemical activity, and conscious activity is only a very, very complicated vital activity. Sometimes, such attempted reduction is called "the fallacy of nothing but."

materialism admits that conscious activities cannot be reduced to local motion but maintains that nevertheless all being is material. If materialism includes an explanation of human history as determined by evolving material conditions, it is usually called dialectical materialism (or theoretical Marxism). Dogmatic materialism maintains that matter is an adequate and satisfying explanation; at the present time this philosophy is more commonly called "scientific naturalism" or "scientific humanism."⁶ Critical or positivistic materialism holds that the search for any ultimate explanation is impossible, meaningless, or futile; the modern form of this doctrine used to be called "logical positivism" or "logical empiricism"; in its contemporary stage of development it is often called "philosophical analysis" or "analytic philosophy"; in an extreme form it is called "general semantics."

Pantheism is the doctrine that the world is God or God is the world. It has taken and takes many forms: nature-pantheism, idealistic pantheism (which holds that sensible things either have no reality at all or only the partial reality' of illusion), atheistic idealism (which denies the existence both of matter and of a God distinct from the spirit, mind, or idea), and so on.

Theists we have defined above as all who in any way accept the existence of God. For our purposes, we need to make a distinction among theists, for some of them hold that we can *certainly know* the existence of God, and others do not. Agnosticism is the doctrine that we cannot know or at least cannot know with certitude that there is a being outside the material universe. Agnostics who are theists usually accept God for some noncognitive reason. Sentimentalists maintain that although we cannot know there is a God we can feel his reality'. Fideists claim that we cannot know or at least cannot prove the existence of God, but we accept it on faith or tradition. Pragmatists who are theists

* "Humanism" in this sense is obviously something quite different from the humanism which is the aim of the liberal arts program; the latter is called humanism because it aims to educate the "whole man"; the former, because it denies that there is any reality superior to man.

hold that God's existence is a meaningful postulate and "true" in the sense that it is important in a man's life. Neo-Kantians hold that the postulate of God's existence is not only important but necessary for freedom and moral action; they maintain, however, that it cannot be proved in the sense of a rational demonstration.

63. The question of knowledge

In asking the question, Does God exist? we must clearly understand its import. We are not asking whether we can know God in Himself without relation to the world.⁷ Some thinkers have tried to assert that we can have an immediate experience of God by means of a natural mysticism.⁸ There is no question but that there can be a mystical experience of God in some way; but we can safely assume that this is not the common experience of men. Moreover, it can be proved that as long as we are in our present condition of knowing, it is impossible to have an immediate knowledge of God as He is in Himself.⁹

Our knowledge of the existence of God is therefore some kind of mediate knowledge of God inasmuch as He has some relation to the universe. At the level of unreflective, spontaneous knowledge¹⁰ most people know with certitude that God exists. We are not going to question this knowledge; in other words, we are not going to doubt God's existence. Our question is, Can there be a demonstrative (scientific) knowledge of the existence of God as the cause of the beings of our experience?

To ask a question about the cause of the material universe is obviously not to ask about univocal causes. Univocal causes are

⁷ On the kind of knowledge we can have of God and of other spiritual things, see Selected Passages, No. 24.

⁸ "Mysticism" means (a) a kind of internal experience of some remarkable working of God in the soul; (b) the Uieoretical explanation of such experience.

⁹ See, for example, St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, I't. 1, q. 12, arts. 2, 3, and 4; also see below, secs. 67 and 68, for a brief statement of the kind of knowledge we do have of God.

¹⁰ See above, sec. 1.

of the same nature as their effects and so belong to the same material universe as those effects. Moreover, all univocal causes are secondary causes; that is, they presuppose other causes and a pre-existing patient upon which to act. Hence, univocal causes are never total causes of the whole being of the effect. Univocal causes can be arranged in an historical series; that is, one precedes the other in time. An example of such a series is the "father and son" series of human beings. Now, suppose we were to ask whether a given man had a father and whether this father, in turn, had a father, and so on down the series; it would be absurd to wish to follow such a series and at the same time to hope to arrive at a First Cause. An historical series of univocal causes is a series it is true; but its order is accidental (contingent),¹¹ not necessary. Some people think that an accidental or historical series cannot be infinite; hence they conclude that the entire world had a beginning in time and that therefore there must be a cause who is at the beginning of the entire universe.¹² This argument is not nearly so simple as it looks at first sight, and we will make no use of it.¹³

In addition to univocal causes, there are nonunivocal (analo-

¹¹ This order is accidental, because "to cause this individual effect," and "to be caused by this particular agent" belong neither to the constitutive essence (substantial or accidental) nor to the properties of the things concerned.

On the other hand, the order of instrument to principal cause is essential or necessary, for the instrument as instrument actually exists as such only when it is moved by the principal cause.

"Distinguish between the statement, "An historical series cannot be infinite," and the statement, "Scientific evidence indicates that our universe (in its present form) in fact began its evolution at a specified point in time." Modern cosmogonies almost all demand a temporal origin—billions of years ago—for the present stars and nebulae. But they do not unequivocally prove that this point is an absolute beginning.

¹² St. Thomas wrote a special treatise, *On the Eternity of the World*, in which he concludes that it cannot be proved that an historical (or accidental) series *cannot* be infinite. Of course we know, by an infallible revelation, that the universe in fact began in time, but this is not our question—knowledge by faith is not the point of our present investigation. An argument which is not rationally certain should not be used, especially since we do have really sound arguments at our disposal.

gous and equivocal) causes. We have already seen,¹⁴ though only in a brief way, that there are such causes in the real order. A nonunivocal cause is one which is not of the same nature as its effect but has an equivalent perfection (equivocal cause) or a similar and greater perfection (analogous cause). The relationship between an effect and its nonunivocal cause involves both a dependence of the effect on its cause and an inequality of perfection in effect and cause. This inequality in perfection or act we have called “causal analogy” or “the analogy of eminence in causality.”¹⁵

If there is a series of analogous causes, as for example, in the relation between a principal cause and its instrument, this is an ordered series. But note that this is not an historical order of sequence; there is no time involved in such a relationship. The order is an order of dependence; the instrument depends on the principal cause precisely for its causality, and this order cannot be reversed (the pencil cannot become the principal cause, and I cannot become the instrument of the pencil). This order of dependence in causality is therefore intrinsically necessary to the causality and so is a *per se* order.

G4. The question of proof

To answer the question, Are there men? we need but point and then show that what we point to verifies or realizes what we mean by *man*. Strictly speaking, this not a proof; at most it is a pointing out of the evidence which is immediately available. To answer the question, “Is there a city called Montreal?” we might have to have recourse to the testimony of some one who had been in contact with immediately available evidence. Strictly speaking, this also is not a demonstration; testimony never makes us see the truth of what we believe on testimony. And it should be noted that testimony can never be used precisely to testify to the

¹⁴ On the distinction between univocal, analogous, and equivocal causes, see above, sec. 47.

¹⁵ See above, sec. 51.

existence of the testifier (it may testify to his name ["Are you John Smith?"] or his nature, substantial or accidental ["Are you English by descent?"]).

Anyone who asks, "Is there a God?" is asking because he has not had any immediate experience of that being. We do not mean to imply that such experience is possible or not possible; we are concerned only with the fact. As students of metaphysics, we are dealing with being and the causes (principles) of being according to the proper intelligibility of being and not with what authoritative witnesses or documents may have had to say about it. As far as investigating testimony is concerned, that is not the job of philosophy (but of history or at least of an historical science). Hence, neither the way of immediate evidence nor that of testimony is available to us. And so we must use some kind of proof.

Proofs can be classified in many ways; what concerns us now is the point of departure which is used in a proof. From this point of view proofs are divided into those which proceed from cause to effect and those which proceed from effect to cause. The former we will call "causal proof" (sometimes called a *propter quid* demonstration, for it tells us that a thing is and also why it is); the latter is called a "fact proof" (or *quia* proof, for it tells us only *that* something is).

Strictly speaking, it is impossible to use a causal proof to prove the existence of a First Cause, for precisely what we mean by a "First Cause" is one that itself has no cause. But it may be possible to use something which for us (considering our way of knowing) is in the place of a cause; such a proof can be called "proof from a prior reason" (fl *simultaneo*, because it proceeds from something which is really identical with the existence of the First Cause but with regard to our way of knowing is prior). The "proof from a prior reason" can be formulated in several ways. St. Anselm expressed it thus: (1) God exists in the mind—we can think of Him. (2) God is that than which a greater cannot be thought of. (3) To exist both in reality and in the mind is

greater than to exist in the mind alone. (4) God exists in reality. Leibniz puts his proof this way: (1) God is a necessary being. (2) If a necessary being is possible, it exists. (3) The necessary being is possible. (4) Therefore He exists. Both of these proofs depend for their validity on the implied premise that God is real. St. Anselm, of course, was working within faith—he already believed that God exists; but independently of faith, all that St. Anselm's proof proves is that unless we think of an existing God we are not thinking of God at all.¹⁶ Leibniz's proof hinges on this: that the necessary being is not merely possible-to-be-thought-of but is really possible. But how anyone is to arrive at such a knowledge prior to his knowledge that there is a God is inexplicable. Since these two formulations of the "proof from a prior reason" are considered by all who try to use such a proof to be the very best ways to put this proof, we can conclude that such a proof is either impossible or presupposes what it claims to prove. Therefore, the only way we can prove the existence of God is by a fact proof.¹⁷

What precisely does a fact proof do? In general, it proves that something is or is such and such by means of a point of departure which in the course of proof becomes known to be dependent upon what is to be proved. The structure of that proof, still in general, is something like this: "Given X as a fact, we see by inspection and analysis of X that it depends upon Y; therefore Y." The fact proof has two major forms: one in which we proceed from a property to an essence, which is proceeding from effect to cause (and this proof can be cast into an Aristotelian syllogism); the other in which we proceed from one thing to another which is its efficient cause, and this reasoning process is too complex to be put into a syllogism. It is only the second type of fact proof which is in question here, and the structure of that proof precisely must be (1) something given in experience (2)

¹⁶We are not investigating what St. Anselm himself meant by his argument or what his contemporaries understood but rather what our contemporaries would make of it.

¹⁷On the sources of our knowledge of God, see *Selected Passages*, No. 27.

from which we come to see gradually that this given necessarily implies an existent as its cause.

If we were to rest content with the conclusion that there is *a* cause of material being and not investigate whether we are asking for a univocal or an analogous cause, our fact proof would be simple and syllogistic. Our argument would follow a pattern something like the following proof:

"A man has died of wounds which were not self-inflicted.
But: such wounds are only caused by a killer.
Therefore: There is a killer."

A detective would not be content with such a conclusion. He must indeed know whether a killer is to be looked for, and to that end he must determine that the death was not accidental or self-inflicted. But his major problem is, "Who is the killer?" The proof for this is no longer syllogistic.

Similarly, when we ask, "Does God exist?" we cannot be content with the conclusion that *a* cause of material being exists; we must identify this cause as God. Therefore, in addition to the two steps of argumentation mentioned above, a third is necessary, in which we conclude that the existent cause of the material universe is God.

65. Evidence and argumentation (I)

(1) It is given in immediate experience that change is going on (in the general sense that there are transitions from potency to act, as for example, some local motion is beginning, growth is going on, someone is beginning to know).

(2) [a] Something passes from potency to act only through the agency of a being in act.¹⁸

[b] It is impossible that there be an infinite series of agents such that each while being the cause of change in another is itself being changed so as to cause.

¹⁸ See above, Chap. VII, secs. 46 and 50.

N.B. This is not a question of an historical series of univocal agents, for such a series does not explain why an agent is causing here and now. We are talking about a series of causes that are of themselves and intrinsically subordinated and, consequently, are not univocal but analogous or equivocal causes. The characteristic of a *per se* series is that each dependent member of the series is precisely what it is through its dependence on another. In the present case, every subordinate member of the series is actually causing existential act by receiving an existential influence. Now to say that there is a series (finite or infinite) such that each member of that series depends on something other, and such that the whole series (or the first member, if the series is finite) does not depend on something other which is what-it-is without being caused—this statement is self-contradictory and therefore meaningless.

[c] Therefore there *is* a First Cause of the actual existential causality of *per se* ordered causes. This cause is, and is a cause, by the analogy of eminence in causality. Because it is a *First* Cause, it is in no way caused by another and so cannot have any real potency; it is pure act.

(3) Therefore, a First Cause exists, which as First is unique and supreme, and this is the Cause which we call God.

66. Evidence and argumentation (II)

(1) It is given in immediate experience that contingent beings exist (for anything which changes is existentially contingent, such that what-it-is is really distinct from its act of existing).

(2) [«] But that which is existentially contingent depends on a cause for its existence.¹⁹

[b] It is impossible that there be an infinite series of existentially contingent beings such that each of them depends on another for its act of existing.

N.B. An existentially contingent being *is* because of another which here and now is the cause of its being (as every- effect, formally speaking, depends on its cause, here and now, for its being as effect). To say A exists because of B, and so on, implying thereby that none of the existential causes exists of itself, is to say that things both exist and do not exist.

¹⁹ See above, sec. 50.

[c] Therefore, there exists an existentially necessary being on which all contingent beings depend precisely for their existing, and in this being essence is necessarily identical with its act of existing. Hence, this being is pure act in the order of existence and so is absolutely unlimited, fully actual of its nature, completely perfect.²⁰

(3) Therefore, there exists a First Cause in the order of existence, which is pure act in that order, whose essence is identical with its act of existing, which is therefore properly named "Who is" (without any limitation), and this is God.

67. The analogy of participation

The basis for our argument has been the existential dependence of secondary causes and of contingent beings upon an efficient cause. Previously²¹ we have seen that nonunivocal causes are similar to their effects according to the analogy of eminence in causality. But this relationship, taken by itself and in the abstract, does not enable us to decide whether the nonunivocal cause is analogous or equivocal—in other words, whether the cause is intrinsically and properly in itself analogous to the effect or is only truly denominated such (as a healthy climate is not properly "healthy" but is truly denominated healthy because of its influence upon the health of living things).

Let us look at the analogy between God and sensible things, no longer abstractly as an instance of eminence in causality but concretely, in regard to what is truly said of God in our conclusion. We say *that* God *is*. And we mean that He is, in the sense that He is actually exerting a causal influence upon the causality and existence of real things in the proper sense of the term *real*. We have seen above²² that "is" in the metaphysician's sense means "exercising or having an act of existing." We have seen²³

* See above, sec. 40.

" See above, sec. 51.

@ Secs. 10 and 12.

"Above, sec. 46.

that the causality of an efficient cause is an expression of the intrinsic dynamism of the act of existing;²⁴ and that conversely that which does not exist cannot be an agent. Therefore, the "is" which we predicate of God means a real and intrinsic act of existing, and so is predicated according to the intrinsic analogy of eminence in causality.²⁵

Furthermore, God is the *First Cause*. Therefore, no other being can be related to Him as cause to effect. Since potency is unintelligible and impossible unless there is an act of which this potency precisely is the potency,²⁰ there can be no intrinsic or receptive potency in God. He is therefore pure act—not the act which is the act of a potency and is received into the potency as a principle of being but an act which is the subsistent thing itself. And this act is the act of existing. Hence, God is a subsistent act of existing. We have seen above²⁷ that an act is limited and multiplied only by a potency in which it is received. If an act is subsistent and not received, it is necessarily perfect, unlimited, and unique, and thereby distinguished from all received acts.²⁸ Hence, God, as a pure act of existing, is the perfection of all existence, infinite and unique and distinct from all the beings which *have* an act of existing. His nature, inasmuch as we can use the term "nature" of God, is to be—simply, without any limitation.

If God, by His nature or essence, is His act of existing, it

²⁴ This statement need not imply that an agent acts necessarily. Only when an existing agent is a nonfree agent does it act necessarily; a free agent acts freely. But whether an agent acts freely or necessarily, its activity and its causality both are a kind of "superabundance" of act, a kind of overflowing of the actuality of esse. Less metaphorically, esse is the source within a being of all its other acts.

"Because the kind of argument we use to arrive at a knowledge of the existence directly does not enable us to decide whether the eminent cause is analogous or equivocal (see above, sec. 51), no direct knowledge of subsistent esse is implied; see St. Thomas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 3, art. 4, ad 2.

" See above, sec. 40; see also below, sec. 73.

"Sec. 40 (3).

* On this distinction between God and creatures, see Selected Passages, No. 26, at the end of this chapter.

follows that we can say that His essence is to exist; God is by His very essence. All beings other than God are because they share or participate in a "common" act of existing; they are by participation (namely, by participating in the act of existing). Here then we have a new analogy, which we may well call "the analogy of participation."²⁹ When we say, "God is," we designate an act of existing which *is a nature*; when we say, "A limited (contingent, caused) thing is," we designate an act of existing possessed by, received in, and limited to, a potential subject-essence.

Being and the properties of being (the transcendentals) are properly predicated of God according to the analogy of participation.³⁰ What about some perfections which in man are strictly accidental, such as the perfection of wisdom? Such perfections or attributes, if they are really and unqualifiedly perfections, can be predicated of God positively and properly, according to an anal-

*The relation in *being* between God and any finite being is the only instance of the analogy of participation in being. In the next chapter, we will see that the analogy of participation in the transcendentals (good, true, and so on) also is found between God and any finite being. See also, Selected Passages, No. 25.

In addition to these basic, essential instances of the analogy of participation, where efficient causality is intrinsically involved in the analogy, it may be helpful to mention that there are other instances of the analogy of participation in which efficient causality is not directly involved. We can correctly speak of the analogy of participation whenever one being is by nature what another is by nonessential (that is, which is not a part of the essence) received act. Thus, human beings are not, in the strict sense of the word, *intelligent* by nature but rather *rational*, which implies a connection with sensory life. Nevertheless, men do occasionally perform acts of simple intelligence through their power of intellect, which, as operative power, is an accidental act in relation to substance. Angels, on the other hand, are simply intellectual by nature (though not by being), for the only operations they have are on the intellectual level. Hence, man, in his acts of simple intelligence, can be said to participate in angelic intelligence. We can find another instance of participation within man himself. Thus, man's higher sensory powers, through the reception of an influence from his intellect, sometimes act in a way which is imperfectly similar to the way in which intellect acts by its nature. In this meaning of the term, a man's emotional life can be said to be *reasonable*, not by nature but by participation.

•How we can name God is discussed more fully in Selected Passages, No. 30.

ogy of proper proportionality'. Thus, once the existence of God is known, and also His complete perfection, we can truly predicate the perfection of wisdom of God, for, as a wise man orders all his actions according to their real value, so God's effects are ordered according to their intrinsic values.³¹ But let it be noted that no analogy of proper proportionality between God and any finite things can be used until we first know the existence of God.

Now that we have seen, at least in outline, the whole scope of analogy, it will be useful to organize and interrelate all the kinds of analogy'. The analogy' of participation is the last to be discovered, but it is the primary and basic one. God is by His essence, and when He, as an analogous cause, makes things to be, He communicates to them the perfection of being in a partial and limited way, so that these things are by participation. Through the analogy' of eminence in causality' there arise many' participants in being. Each thing which is by participation is something-having-esse, and therefore each is related to every' other one by an analogy of proper proportionality. Because any thing which has esse is intrinsically composite, and because such a nature is a substance which acquires perfections which are accidents, within a being there is an analogy of proportion, so that all the internal principles of a being can themselves be called beings. Because these internal principles stand in a series of similar relations to each other, we discover the act-potency correlation and find that act and potency' are analogously verified in the case of the constitutive principles of being according to an analogy' of proper proportionality.³² Because things which exist by' participation are capable of being modified—in all cases accidentally, in some also substantially—they' can stand in multiple causal rela-

³¹ See, in addition. Selected Passages, No. 27.

³² "In addition, "act" is said of esse and of form analogously, according to the analog)' of proportion; this is an extrinsic analogy, as explained above, sec. 41, n. 12.

Furthermore, there is an analogy of proportion, according to which the intrinsic principles of composite substance are called substance; form is called substance more properly, matter, less properly, inasmuch as it is related to and perfected by form. See above, sec. 32.

tions with each other. Among these are causal situations wherein the effect receives the communicated perfection in an essentially imperfect way. Hence, even among secondary causes there is to be found the analogy of eminence in causality.³⁸

The dependence of all beings on God is a total dependence. Hence, our universe of experience, and all beings contingent, exist by creation, that is, their whole being is from God. By creation we understand the complete and total dependence of one being with regard to its entire being upon another as upon its total cause. An equivalent definition is the more common statement that creation is the production of a thing, no subject and no other cause being presupposed.

When did creation happen? The arguments we have used, as well as the other arguments of St. Thomas, conclude that the entire universe exists by creation. These arguments simply do not enable us to decide whether created things have been in existence for a limited time or from all eternity.

68. Answers to objections

Against the second argument (which is the "third way" of St. Thomas), some writers object: "A conclusion cannot be stronger than the premises; but we begin with contingent things; therefore we can only reach a contingent being in our conclusion." The answer to this is: the beings with which we begin are contingent; but *that they are contingent* is true with absolute, even though only consequent necessity. Furthermore, the link from effect to cause (no matter what the nature of the effect, provided only that it is), is absolutely necessary. Hence, the argument to a necessary being is completely valid.

The objections of agnostics and positivistic empiricists are based on a consideration of purely conceptual (therefore univocal) knowledge and on essences. They maintain, either explicitly or implicitly, that we must know *what* a thing is before we can know that it is, or, at the very least, that we must be able to

³⁸ For an outline summary of analogy, see Chap. XIV, sec. 108.

state its essence. But we maintain that there is knowledge in addition to the conceptual knowledge of essences, namely, judgmental knowledge, and that there is a principle of reality beyond essence, namely, the acts of existing and activity. It is true that the knowledge we ultimately arrive at is analogical and strictly limited. We do not know with any proper knowledge *what* God is. We know, first of all, that the statement, "God is," is true. But further reflection on the implications of the fact proof by which we know that God is gives us the conclusion that in God there is no receptive potency, so that He is a pure act (subsistent act) of existing. We know, further, that this perfection of existing, which we cannot comprehend, englobes in a unity the perfections of creatures in an eminent way. Hence, we can summarize our knowledge about God thus: it is positive inasmuch as we assert truly that God is the cause of the various perfections which we experience and that therefore He is, simply and unqualifiedly; it is negative inasmuch as all univocal perfections, and even more all imperfections, must be denied of Him; it is knowledge by eminence, inasmuch as the act of existing—which even in creatures is the act of all other acts—when it is a subsistent act, is, in a simple way which we cannot grasp in a concept or any number of concepts, all the perfections of creatures and infinitely more.

The objections against the existence of God which are based on the reality of evil cannot be answered in such a way that evil will cease to trouble us. But the following things can be said, (a) No creature can be absolutely perfect; it is necessarily a limited being. Moreover, as limited in being, it is contingent, and so in one way or another is able to fail, (b) No one creature can be as good an effect as a universe composed of many differing kinds of beings. But this very plurality, which is good, entails necessarily the possibility of conflict, contrariety, and the like, between those creatures, (c) Rational and free beings are the greatest, most perfect kinds of creatures (as we will see in the philosophy of man). But if God really means to create a large number of free

beings, who are good inasmuch as they freely fulfill the law of their nature and destiny, then, being really free and limited (contingent), it is absolutely necessary that they be able (and hence be allowed by God) to fall into moral evil, (d) Finally, if God who is good is to be the author of a created universe in which there is to be evil, this can happen only if God can and does draw forth good from that evil. In some cases we can see this: from physical evil, God brings forth moral good that otherwise would not have come about; from moral evil itself we sometimes see the greater good of penance, greater love of God, and so forth arise; in other cases, we see that some evil men are the occasion for good in others. However, there are also many instances where we cannot see this: we only know that in ways unknown to us God is able to draw forth good from evil. This is enough to break down the force of the objection.

69. The creative intellect and the finality
of natural activities

We have seen, in the first argument for the existence of a First Cause, that God is the First Cause of the activity of all created beings. As *First Cause*, God cannot be caused by anything else in any way, and so there can be no potency of any kind in Him.³⁴ In other words, He is pure act. Consequently, God cannot be material, for to be material involves the presence of a real potency, namely, *priman'* matter. Hence, God is a nonmaterial being, or, in other words, a spiritual being. Consequently, God cannot be the source of activity after the manner of a material being; He cannot cause activity by contact or gravitation or any other material activity. Now, we have in ourselves the experience of a principle of activity which is not itself moved by any type of material motion, namely, our acts of willing.⁸⁵ Hence, God is the source of activity in created things by an act of will. But will

³⁴ See below, sec. 73, the discussion of possibility.

⁸⁵ This is discussed at great length in the philosophy of human nature.

presupposes intellectual knowledge. Hence, God is an intellectual being.

We have also seen that an effect cannot be more perfect than its cause.³⁰ But God is the cause of all contingent beings, and so is the cause of men, who are intellectual beings. Hence, God must be an intellectual being.

God, therefore, is the total cause of contingent beings, on Whom the whole reality of these beings depends. And He is a cause through intellect and will.

With these conclusions as a background, we can now complete the analysis of finality, which we left incomplete in Chapter VIII." We saw there that every agent acts for an end. We saw also that there are two types of agents, those with knowledge and those without it. Knowing agents foreknow the results of their activities; and these results inasmuch as they are foreknown and desired are in the full sense goals, or final causes. But how is the end present, and how does it cause, in agents which do not have knowledge?

We can derive some understanding of this from human activity. Human products are artifacts and are made for ends. This is perhaps most clearly evident in machines. A machine is made for an end; when it acts, it acts for that end, and its activity is determined by that end. Of course, a machine is only an accidental structure; the various substances in it are not human products (even synthetics are products of nature-guided-by-man; they are not purely artifacts). God, on the other hand, is the creative cause of the whole being, and so there is only a feeble analogy between an inventor and the creator. But it helps us to see the causality of the end. The end is a true cause of mechanical activity, inasmuch as it was foreseen by the inventor and desired by him, and, by being a determinant of the mechanical structure, is a determinant of mechanical activity. So, too, the end is a real cause

^{**} See above, sec. 50.

⁸⁷ See above, sec. 57.

of the activity of noncognoscitive agents, inasmuch as it was foreseen and desired by the First, creative Cause of those agents, and, by being a determinant of the intrinsic constitution of that nature, is a determinant of natural activity.

When we studied final causality in the preceding chapter,³⁹ we saw that it is possible for two causes to interfere with each other's activity'. Most often, such interference is negative in character—the effect is an accident, something less perfect, of a lower order of being than either cause. And we saw that such interference, since as such it does not produce new being, in the strict sense of the word also does not require a cause. But we also saw that occasionally the interference of two secondary causes may bring about a positive effect which is different in kind from either of the causes directly concerned. Such an effect—a chance effect—is a real and positive reality. What is uncaused, at the level of the causes immediately^l concerned, is the interference itself. If another secondary cause brings about the interference (for example, a man), we have called it an instance of "relative chance," for it is chance in relation to the immediate causes but is finalized by the cause of the interference. We have also seen that some interferences are not brought about by any^l secondary cause at all—there is not only^l relative chance but real, irreducible chance and contingency, namely, absolute chance.

At this point of our investigation (in the same chapter), we asked ourselves whether this analysis was sufficient, and we concluded that it was not. Why? Because the causality of the cross-interfering causes, *as received in the patient*, is such as to lead to the production of a new being. Where is the finality by which such a change leads to such a kind of being? Not in the process itself, for the process is precisely that which *is* finalized. Not in the new being, for it does not yet exist. Not in either or any of the interfering causes, for the finality of their natural activity is directed to a univocal and not to a chance (or equivocal) result. Now that we know that there is a God, Who is an intelligent

^w See above, sec. 57.

being, and a cause by creation of natures, we have found an intellect where the order of process to term is known and intended. Hence, the unity and finality of positive chance results lies in the order of beings as understood in the Divine Intellect.

Therefore, though on the one hand, as against determinists we find and admit real, absolute chance and contingency in the material universe, we cannot admit chance as a total and ultimate explanation. In other words, there is chance, not merely in relation to *some* created agents but absolutely, even when all created agents are considered. But chance is not total, for the finality of the interference of causes and the order of process to term which escapes the finality of any and all secondary causes is contained within the finality known by the Divine Intellect, which is the creative cause of the whole universe.³⁰

70. Definitions

A *per se* ordered series is a group of objects which by their very nature have determinate relations of priority and posteriority. (For example, the series of natural numbers; the parts of a real definition; the biological stages of a plant: seed, plant, flower, seed.)

A per se ordered series of causes is a group of several causes which by their very nature as causes depend on the next higher in the group for their very character of being causes. (For example, principal and instrumental causes; knowledge and desire; nerve impulse and muscle movement.)

Proof (demonstration) is a kind of mediate knowledge (reasoning) which because of the clear truth of its premises and the explicit and full form of procedure leads to a certainly true conclusion.

Causal proof is one which not only establishes a conclusion as true but shows why it must be so.

Fact proof is a proof which establishes that a conclusion is true

³⁰For a summary statement of God's causal relation to the world, see Selected Passages, No. 29.

without any reference to the ontological cause of the conclusion. (For example, any proof of a cause from its effect.)

Analogy of participation is a nonunivocal similarity of two analogates, one of which is by nature or essence (and therefore wholly) what the other is partially by received act.

Pure act is an act which is not the act of a potency, not a principle, but subsistent and complete in its own order.

Total chance is a happening or being which is alleged to have come to be without any determination from a final cause, including the First Cause as well as all secondary causes.

71. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 2, arts. 1-3 (the proof for the existence of God), q. 12, arts. 4 and 12 (the limits of our knowledge of the Divine Essence); q. 13, arts. 1, 3, 4, 5, 11, and 12 (how we can name God).

E. F. Caldin, *Science and Christian Apologetic*, Aquinas Papers, No. 17 (London, Blackfriars, 1951), pp. 18-21, on the proof for the existence of God.

Etienne Gilson, *The Philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas*, 2d ed. (St. Louis, Herder, 1939), pp. 66-130.

----- *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2d ed. (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), pp. 160-167, 172-179, on the meaning of being and on existential contingency.

G. P. Klubertanz, S.J., "Being and God According to Contemporary Scholastics," *The Modern Schoolman*, Vol. XXXII (1954), pp. 1-17.

Jacques Maritain, *The Range of Reason* (New York, Scribner's, 1952), "A New Approach to God," pp. 86-102; "The Meaning of Contemporary Atheism," pp. 103-120.

----- *Approaches to God* (New York, Harper, 1954).

Pius XII, "Modern Science and the Existence of God," *The Catholic Mind*, L, No. 1071 (March, 1952), 182-193. In this address, the Pope makes two points: first, that the modern science shows the mutability (and therefore the contingency) of all material being, and secondly, that the researches of modern science on the formation of the solar system and the stars indicate (though they do not prove), that the universe as we know it had an origin in time. These indications, however, are not yet of the nature of an established hypothesis, and, if established, they would prove an absolute origin of the universe *as we know it*; they cannot prove whether this absolute origin was preceded by another mode of material reality or whether this absolute origin was an absolute origin of material being.

A. D. Sertillanges, *Foundations of Thomistic Philosophy*, trans. Godfrey Austruther (St. Louis, Herder, 1931), pp. 45-90; this author stresses the "difference" in analogical predication so much that sometimes he seems to be an agnostic; he should be read according to his intention, which is to follow and expound St. Thomas's doctrine of analogy.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

24. *How We Can Know Cod at All*

For we cannot know the essences of the separated substances by demonstrative knowledge, for these essences are per se intelligible—by an intellect proportioned to this. But it is not possible to gather a knowledge of them from principles prior to them. But by speculative knowledge we can know of them whether they are, and what they are not, and something according to a likeness found in lower tilings.

*Commentary on the Posterior
Analytics of Aristotle*, Bk. I,
lect. 41.

Human reason is deficient in the knowledge of separated substances, which nonetheless are most knowable in their nature. With regard to the knowledge of them, our intellect is like the eye of the owl to the light of the sun, as is said in *Metaphysics*, II, and therefore it is said in *De Animalibus*, XI, that about them we can know extremely little by reason, although that little which we do know about them is pleasing and dear to us.

*Commentary on the Second
Book of the Sentences*, dis.
3, q. 1, art. 3.

25. *The Analogy of Participation*

Only God is his own esse, existing, as it were essentially, that is, inasmuch as his esse is his substance. This can be said of no other being. For subsisting esse can be only one, as also subsisting whiteness could be only one. Therefore, it is necessary that any other thing is a being by participation, so that there is a distinction in it between the substance partaking of esse, and the esse which is participated. But everything which participates is like potency to act; consequently, the substance of ever)' created being is related to its esse as potency to act.

Quodlibet III, art. 20.

There are two ways of predicating one thing of another: essentially, and by participation. For light is predicated of an illuminated body by participation; but if there were a separated light, it would be predi-

cated of that essentially. According to this, it must be said that being is predicated essentially of God alone, because the divine esse is a subsisting and absolute esse. But of any creature it is predicated by participation, for no creature is its esse, but is something having esse. Thus also God is called good essentially, because He is goodness itself; but creatures are good by participation, because they have goodness; for everything, inasmuch as it is, is good. . . . Whenever something is predicated of another by participation, it is necessary that there be something there besides that which is participated, and therefore in every creature the creature itself which has esse is not the same as its esse, and this is what Boethius says in his book. *De Hebdomadibus*, "In everything which is, besides the First, esse is other than that which is."

But it is to be noted, that there are two ways of participating. One way is, as being of the substance of that which participates, as the genus is participated by the species. This is not the way that esse is participated by the creature, for that is of the substance of a thing which falls into its definition. But "being" is not of the definition of any creature, for it is neither genus nor difference. But it is participated as not being of the essence of the thing. Hence, the question, "Is it?" is a different one from, "What is it?" Consequently, since everything which is outside the essence of the things, is called an accident, and so the Commentator says, on *Metaphysics*, V, that this proposition, "Socrates is," has an accidental predicate, inasmuch as it signifies the being of the thing, or the truth of the proposition. Now, it is true that this term *being*, inasmuch as it implies the thing to which such an esse belongs, in this sense signifies the essence of the thing, and is divided into the ten genera, but not univocally, because esse does not belong to all things in the same way, but it belongs to substance of itself, but to other things in another way. If, therefore, there is in the angel a composition of essence and esse, this is not a composition of parts of substance, but as of substance and that which adheres to substance. . . .

In reply to the second argument, it is to be said that esse is an accident, not as if it were accidental to the thing, but as the actuality of every substance. Consequently God, who is His own actuality, is His own esse.

Quodlibet II, art. 3.

Although the esse of a thing is other than its essence, we are not to think that esse is something superadded after the manner of an accident, but it is as it were constituted by the principles of the essence.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics*, Bk. IV, lect.
1 (cd. Cathala, No. 558).

26. *How God Is Distinguished from Creatures*

A thing is said to be determinate in two senses: the first, by reason of limitation; the second, by reason of distinction. But the divine essence is not something determinate in the first way; only in the second way. For a form is not limited except by this, that it is received in another, to which the matter is proportioned. But in the divine essence, there is not anything which is received in another, because His esse is the subsisting divine nature itself. But such a situation is not to be found in any other thing. For every other thing has an esse which has been received, and thus limited, and hence it is that the divine essence is distinguished from all others by this not-being-received-in-another. Thus, if there were a whiteness not in a subject, by this very fact it would be distinguished from every whiteness existing in a subject, although as whiteness it would not be received and so not limited. Therefore, it is clear that the divine essence is not something general in being, since it is distinguished from all other things, but it is general only in causing, because that which is by itself is the cause of all those things which are not by themselves. Consequently, the per se subsisting esse is the cause of every other esse received in another.

Quodlibet VII, art. 1, ad
1.

27. *The Sources and Nature of Our Knowledge of God*

First he shows what they knew about God, secondly, he shows from whom they received this knowledge . . . thirdly, he shows how. . . . For there was in them a true knowledge of God with regard to some points, for "that of God which is known," that is, which is knowable about God by man's reason, "is manifest in them," that is, is manifest to them by something which is in them, that is, by an intrinsic light. We must therefore know that something concerning God is entirely unknown to man in this life, namely, what God is. Hence, St. Paul found at Athens an altar inscribed, "To the unknown God." This is because the knowledge of man begins with those things which are connatural to him, that is, with sensible creatures, which are not proportioned to represent the divine essence.

But man can know God from such creatures in a threefold way, as Dionysius says. The first way is that of causality, for since such creatures are able to cease to be and are changeable, it is necessary that we argue back to some unchangeable and perfect principle, and in this way we know that God is. The second way is that of eminence; for we do not go from all creatures to the first principle, as to a proper and univocal cause, as for example, a man generated a man, but as to a common and greater cause, and in this way we know that God is

above all. The third way is that of negation, because, if God is a greater cause, none of the perfections which are in creatures can pertain to God. . . . And in this way we say that God is unchangeable and infinite, and anything else which is expressed in this way. And this knowledge they had by the inborn light of reason. . . . Then . . . he shows from whom such knowledge was manifested to them, and he says that God manifested it to them. . . . Here we must consider, that one man manifests to another, explaining his conception by some external signs, for example, by word or by writing. But God manifests something to men in two ways. First, by giving him an internal light, by which man knows. . . . Secondly, by placing before him exterior signs of his wisdom, that is, sensible creatures. . . . Thus, therefore, God manifested to them, both by giving an internal light, and by exteriorly showing sensible creatures, in which, as in a book, the knowledge of God can be found.

*Commentary on the Epistle
to the Romans, chap. 1,
lect. 6.*

28. *Meaning of "Substance" as Applied to God*

God, absolutely speaking, is not an accident, but neither can He with entire propriety be called a substance, both because the term *substance* is derived from "standing-under [accidents]," and because substance names the quiddity which is distinct from its *esse*. Consequently, this [distinction of substance and accident] is a distinction of created being. But if one does not insist on this, in an extended sense of the term God can be called a substance (which is understood to be above all created substance), in so far as substance has perfection, such as not to be in another and so on, and then it is identical in the subject and predicate, as is the case with everything that is predicated of God. . . . Consequently, because of the different mode of predicating, substance is not used of God and creatures univocally, but analogously.

*Commentary on the First
Book of the Sentences, dis.
8, q. 4, art. 2, ad 1.*

29. *Relation Between Creatures and God*

For God is He by Whom all things arc, as by their efficient cause, and for Whose sake all things arc, as by their final cause. For all things are for Him, because they are for the sake of His goodness which is to be communicated to them. And this was the reason which moved God to produce things, and so ultimately, all things arc for God. . . .

They are also effectively by Him. . . . Therefore He is the principle and the end of all.

*Commentary on the Epistle
to the Hebrews, chap. 2,
lect. 3.*

30. *How Different Names and Attributes
Can Be Predicated of God*

Because God according to one simple act of existing is perfect in all the ways which are indicated by the names we give Him . . . therefore these names positively belong to Him. . . . The intelligibilities of the attributes are truly in God. . . . The plurality of names comes from the fact that God is greater than our intellect. And the fact that God is greater than our intellect, on God's part, is because the fullness of His perfection, and on our part, our intellect deficiently understands Him. So it is clear that the plurality of those intelligibilities arises not only from the side of our intellect, but also from the side of God, inasmuch as his perfection is greater than every conception of our intellect. Thus, to the plurality of intelligibilities there corresponds something from the side of Gods reality—not indeed a real plurality, but a full perfection because of which all these conceptions are suited to him. . . . On the side of our intellect, and also of the effects [from which we come to know God] [something corresponds] because our intellect cannot conceive the divine perfection with one conception only, but needs many. . . . Therefore there is something in God which corresponds to all these conceptions, namely, his full and every-sided perfection, according to which any name signifying any of these conceptions is truly and properly predicated of God.

*Commentary on the First
Book of the Sentences, dis.
2, q. 1, art. 3.*

CHAPTER X

The Transcendentals

72. Being is a transcendental

Some predicates¹ can be said only of particular classes or kinds of things, and these predicates are usually univocal ones; for example, “white” (which can only be said of things that are extended); “square” (which can only be said of tilings that have a surface). These predicates will be considered in Chapters XI, XII, and XIII. But the predicates to be treated here are common to many kinds of things, and so their communition² must be one of analogy, as we have already seen with regard to *being* and *substance*. A predicate which is not restricted to any category, type, or class of reality, but goes beyond, or “transcends,” all limited areas of reality and all distinctions within reality is called a “transcendental.” The transcendentals are predicates.

We have seen that *is* can be said or predicated of *all* real things. From our study of being, which we know is common by way of analogical inclusion, we can see that being is not a genus, not even the widest possible genus. For genus is always abstract; and the wider and more universal the genus, the more abstract and potential it is. For example, *material substance* is a predicate that can be applied to every thing in our material universe; it is also a very abstract concept and is in potency to all the specific determinations—living, sensitive, rational. But *being* as it is un-

¹ The term “predicate” is here taken in a very wide sense to include verb-predicates (such as “runs,” “is”) as well as nouns and adjectives. For a discussion of those “metaphysicians” and logicians who wish to reduce all two-element propositions (*de secundo adjacente*) to three-element ones (*de tertio adjacente*), see Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2d ed. (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1952), pp. 190-205.

derstood in its first and proper metaphysical sense is named from that which is most actual and concrete, namely, the act of existing. Being is *not* the "widest in extension and the least in comprehension," because the logical rule of the inverse variation of extension and comprehension holds only for universals. Being is at once the widest in extension—for *is* can be said of all tilings—and the fullest in (implicit) comprehension—for any real act or perfection *is*. Being includes all reality; indeed, all the reality of any and all individuals. Therefore, *being* (understood as "the being of metaphysics") is a transcendental.

This conclusion is simple and obvious. A series of problems, however, remains. We have seen that *is* has many meanings and that in addition to its strictly metaphysical meaning, it is also used of things which are real only in the wide sense, and even of purely mental objects. We must therefore also consider how these meanings are related to the metaphysical sense. Moreover, there are some terms which are used more or less in the same sense as *being*, and so we should give a brief consideration to these terms. Finally, some philosophers have raised a question about the sense in which being is a transcendental. We will take up these topics in inverse order.

The question, "In what sense is being a transcendental?" is a question about the unit¹ of being.² The question, "Is being one?" has many meanings. It may mean, "Is there only one being?" and immediate experience shows us many distinct individuals. The question may mean, "Is being univocal?" The reflection which we have made in Chapter III (and the following chapters) shows us that being is analogous. The question may mean, "Is there only one 'kind' of being, for example, material being or limited being?" and a study of the being of metaphysics and of the proof for the existence of God leads us to the conclusion that there are many kinds of beings, which are analogous with several kinds of anal-

¹See above, Chap. II, sec. 12, nn. 23 and 27, and Chap. III, sec. 19, n. 3. St. Thomas explicitly says, "There is no single intelligibility in the things which are said analogously" (*Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 13, art. 5).

ogy (analogy of eminence in causality, analogy of proportion, analogy of participation). The question may mean, "Granted that beings as they are are many and analogous, can they be correctly understood as beings by one concept?" An attentive reflection on our knowledge of being has shown us that it is impossible to have a *concept* of being in its first and proper sense, and so the unity of being is not even of one concept.³ The community of the act of existing is only an analogical one, and so being is *one* transcendental only by the unity of analogy (according to all the kinds of analogy which we found in being).

We can now take up the consideration of the terms which have somewhat the same meaning as *being*. One of these terms which we have already used is "reality," or "the real." As we have seen, this is a term which belongs to the level of everyday, spontaneous knowledge; hence, it is often used in a loose or less precise sense than the term "being." "Thing" as a term from the level of everyday knowledge is like "reality." As used on the level of demonstrative knowledge, "thing" stresses the essence or quiddity and connotes the act of existing (whereas "being" includes the act of existing more directly). "Something," as a technical term on the level of demonstrative knowledge, means the same as "thing," but connotes, in addition, the division of that which is named "something" from other things. In other words, "something" is a term which implies that there are other tilings in addition to the one we call "something." Hence, it implies the unity of the tiling (it is *a* thing) as well as the diversity or multiplicity of tilings.

73. Possibles

As we have already noted, the properly real is being, that which has an act of existing. Nevertheless, we understand that some things *can* be in the real order which here and now actually are not. We understand this from the contingent real tilings which we experience. For these beings manifest themselves as

* For a more elaborate discussion of our knowledge of being, see below, Chap. XIV, *gee.* 107.

contingently existing. They are composed in the order of being itself—namely, of an essence and an act of existing—and consequently we can consider things in relation to existence even though they are not.

When we consider a tiling inasmuch as it is able *to be*, we call it a possible.⁴ A thing which is not, whether it be possible or a mere fiction, is simply nothing in the real order. Such a thing, under the aspect that it simply is not, is not the subject of any form of knowledge at all. If we consider a thing as simply an object of the mind, we are not thinking of a possible; we may be thinking of a logical entity'; we may be studying the content of dreams as a psychologist might do. If we investigate an essence down to the last detail, but only from the point of view of *what* it is, we are not dealing with a possible as possible and so are not dealing with it from the point of view of the philosophy of being—we may be engaged in mathematics or one of the sciences. But when we consider an essence (a thing) inasmuch as some properly real thing can or could correspond to it, then we are considering the possible as possible, that is, in relation to being. A possible considered in this way belongs to the subject of metaphysics.

The intelligibility' of a possible, therefore, lies in its relation to being. As a possible thing, an essence has the possibility of having an act of existing; in other words, it is known as that to which in the real order there could correspond a contingently existing tiling.

Now, to understand an essence with a relation to an act of existing there must be a foundation. This foundation is twofold: (fl) in essence, and this consists in the noncontradictoriness of the constituent elements of that essence; (b) in an act of existing—not its own, of course, because a possible has no act of existing

⁴ By a "pure possible," we mean something which does not exist, but is an object of knowledge with a reference to what could be extramental. We can also, however, consider the possibility of a being which exists; in this case we are not dunking about a possible in the strict sense of the word (sometimes called a "mixed possible").

—the act of existing of some actual cause, past, present, or future. Hence, the intelligibility of a possible depends on its essence (understood with reference to an act of existing which a corresponding real being might have); its possibility of *being* depends on the act of existing of some cause (or causes) adequate to produce an actually existing (real) being corresponding to the knowledge we have.

Possibility', therefore, can readily be divided into two parts: essential possibility (the noncontradictoriness or consistency of its constituent intelligible notes, understood with reference to a being which might exist), and existential possibility, for only that can truly exist which exists necessarily of itself or is produced by an existing cause.

Because the possibility' of being depends on a cause, and causes can be proximate or remote and variously disposed to act, possibility itself can have degrees. Moreover, because that which is possible depends for its possibility on an actual being, a possible can be said to be by an analogy of proportion—although the relationship of a possible to an act of existing is mediate and indirect—namely, through the *esse* of a distinct real being which is its cause.

74. Beings of reason and pure intelligibilities

Whenever we think of something, that "something" can be either a being in the proper sense of that term or some principle of being or something pertaining to a being or sometimes not a being in itself at all (for example, a fiction).⁵ All of these "things," however, can be considered *as known*, and as such they can be called intelligible objects or intelligibilities⁶ (in the wide sense). These intelligibilities, from the viewpoint of being, can be classed into three groups: real beings, beings of reason, and pure intelligibilities (*rationes*), that is, intelligibilities in the strict sense. So

* See Selected Passages, No. 32.

⁵ See Selected Passages, No. 33, especially par. 1, where intelligible objects are divided into three classes.

far in this book we have been considering mainly real beings, although there have been occasional references to the other two groups.

A being of reason is an object which can be thought of but which does not and *cannot* exist in itself. Consequently, in the proper sense of being, such objects are simply not beings. Nevertheless, they are understood *after the manner of beings*. They are objects conceived or mentally constructed with reference to the real order; yet they have no direct correspondent in that order.⁷

Beings of reason are of three kinds. (1) Negations and privations (for example, "nobody," "a hole"; "blindness," "ignorance") obviously do not correspond to any real existent or to any real principle of being. A negative or privative proposition may be true or false, yet the truth of a negative proposition does not imply the existence of a negation. (2) Relations of reason are beings of reason, either because they join together objects which exist only in a mind (for example, the relations of genus, property', subject and predicate) or because they are mentally applied to real beings without a direct and a real foundation in the real, for example, the "right" side of a bible (transferred to tables from the distinction between the sides of an animal body), the "top" of a box whose top and bottom are constructed the same, and so forth. (3) There are also mental constructs which are beings of reason, because as such they cannot exist, and are only indirectly related to the real, that is, through some other real being from which the construct is derived. Among such constructs there are to be found some second-level abstractions (for example, "humanity," which, although it is understood after the manner of the substantial form of a being, is rather the abstracted formal intelligibility' of "man," which is the product of a total abstraction) and some transferred intelligibilities.⁸

⁷ See Selected Passages, No. 31.

• For example, many metaphors like "John Doe is a pig," where we understand John Doe's greediness in terms of the understood nature of a pig. In such metaphors, we attribute an alien nature to the subject. The "pig" we are speaking of is not an existent individual (for such a predication

Beings of reason are beings *because* that is the way we think of them. They are understood as having the nature of being. Because beings of reason are correlative with the real on which they are modeled, the predication is by proportion; because beings of reason are not intrinsic constitutive principles of being but are understood after the manner of beings, the analogy is not intrinsic but extrinsic. Hence, we may say that beings of reason are by an extrinsic analogy of proportion.

Why do men produce or invent beings of reason? For the purpose of a better understanding of, and a more efficient dealing with, real beings. For example, consider how awkward it would be to think and talk of "digging a hole," "curing an illness," "being in debt," without making use of any beings of reason. Again, consider the poverty of our literature if all metaphors were removed from it. Thirdly, our direct (or ontological) understanding of beings is frequently very limited. There are many things which we cannot directly understand in themselves, particularly as soon as we get beyond immediate experience into science. (To say that science makes use of constructs is by no means derogatory to the dignity of science; in a way it is a glorification of the human mind, for although the human intellect is limited by being the intellect of a rational animal, it can at least to some extent transcend its limitations by means of the products of its own activity.)®

Besides real beings and beings of reason, there is a third class of intelligibilities, the pure intelligibilities.¹⁰ Universals, for example, are pure intelligibilities: they are neither merely constructed mental objects nor real beings. With regard to universals, we must distinguish between that which is known and the manner in

would be false); nor is it a being of reason (for beings of reason cannot be directly predicated of existents like John). See above, Chap. II, n. 8, and the article there cited.

* For a fuller discussion of the nature of constructal knowledge and its difference from ontological knowledge, see below, sec. 100.

** See also, Selected Passages, No. 33, for a very full explanation of what an intelligibility is.

which the known is in the mind. "Man," for example, can be truly said to be the knowledge of a real being, because that which we know when we know "man" is wholly and entirely real. But the manner in which we know "man"—namely, as abstract and universal—is unlike the manner in which a man exists—namely, as concrete and singular. Similarly, many of the objects which we speak of in metaphysics are pure intelligibilities. To see the difference between a pure intelligibility and a being of reason it may help to compare two conceptions. As an example of a pure intelligibility we will take the act of existing of a being with respect to what is known when we know it. This act is real (for it is that principle in a being by which it *is*); but with respect to the manner in which it is known, it is not immediately real (since it is known as if it were a subject). As an example of a being of reason, we will take the concept of existence,¹¹ namely, "the form by which a real being is." Existence is a positive formalization, to which no being or principle in the real order directly corresponds. In the real order, there is the *esse* of some being. This *esse* is referred to indirectly by the concept "existence." The mind constructs and conceives, after the manner of a form, a substitute representation of a real intelligible which in itself is not essential or formal. In other words, the mind essentializes and formalizes by way of a construct (derived from a real principle) what it recognizes in the real as belonging to the existential order.

75. The transcendental "one"

The term "one" is used in two quite different senses. The numerical "one" is used in counting and, at the level of demonstrative knowledge, in arithmetic. At present we are not going to deal with the numerical "one" at all. The transcendental "one" means "actually undivided"—for example, in the expression, "in one

¹¹ For the difference between the "concept of existence," which is a constructural concept, and the "conception of the act of existing," which is a direct intelligibility, see above, sec. 12, n. 2-3, 27; sec. 19, n. 3, and below, sec. 107; see also, G. P. Klubertanz, *The Philosophy of Human Nature* (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), pp. 179-180.

piece." The transcendental "one" is an absolute adjective; it does not in any sense imply that there are other things. In form, it is a positive term; but as far as its meaning is concerned, it is negative, for it means "not actually divided." Terms related to "one" are "unique," which means "one and only one"; "whole," which implies that the thing which is actually undivided is capable of division into parts; and "simple," which means "not only undivided but indivisible, having no parts." 12

"One" is the first "property" 18 or attribute of being. It is the *first* property, because it refers to being absolutely, considered in itself (and so is prior by nature to the other transcendentals which belong to being relatively, as we shall see). "One" does not add anything positive to being; it is the being in itself which is undivided. However, we understand this absence of division after the manner of an added qualification.

Every being is one. For a being is either simple, that is, indivisible and so, of course, actually undivided, or it is composed. But parts do not make up a being unless they are *united* in some way or other. And there are a number of kinds of unity.

ONE

per se	according to one act of existing 14
	according to one essence (nature)
per accidens	by composition of substance and accident (or
	two accidents, according to their inherence in the same substance)
accidental	of many substances according to some accident:
	dynamic: joined in operation (activity)
	static: joined in place, structure, and so forth

" See also, Selected Passages, No. 34.

" From the Latin, *proprietas* or *passio entis*.

14 Ordinarily, both these types of per se unity are found together, for the undividedness of essence and of the act of existing are naturally proportioned to each other. Hence, for many purposes, that can be said to be "per se one" which has one essence or nature. But it is still the undividedness of the act of existing which is the most basic reason for denominating a being *one* being.

"One" and "being" are clearly not synonyms. On the other hand, they clearly do not refer to really distinct principles. Hence, there is a distinction of reason between "one" and "being." Moreover, since "that which is actually undivided" is a being, and *a* being is actually undivided, the distinction between "one" and "being" must be a minor distinction of reason.¹⁰

The opposite of "one" is "many" or "the divided" or "the distinct" or "the different" or "the diverse." Which one will be precisely the opposite of "one" in any given case depends upon the precise connotations in the particular usage of "one."

76. The transcendental "true"

In logic and the theory of knowledge there are many references to "truth." There, "truth" means the "conformity of the mind to things" and, when we are speaking accurately, should always be called *logical* truth. So, too, when we ask whether something is true, we are ordinarily speaking of logical truth. And we use "falsehood" or "falsity" in the same kind of way. However, even in our ordinary speech, we occasionally use the term "true" and especially "false" in a related but quite different sense, as in the expressions "false teeth," "true love," "a true albino." In this sense, we are talking about the conformity of the thing to its definition, essence, and so forth, or, more generally, to knowledge or a mind. (Compare the meaning of the verb "to true.") This is the sense in which we speak of the true in metaphysics, namely, the conformity or conformability' of a thing to a mind.

The true is not a negation or a negative attribute, for it expresses something positive, namely, conformability with intellect. But "true" does not add anything really distinct to "being," for "true" is simply 'being' expressed in its relation to intellect. Hence, the distinction between 'being' and "the true" is a minor distinction of reason.

When we say, "The true is being in relation to intellect," we must determine explicitly' which intellect we are referring to.

¹⁰See above, sec. 25.

Since the beings of our experience, by their very participation in being, are related to the First Being, it is to the Divine Intellect that the true has an essential relation. Because the beings of our experience exist by creation and God creates through intellect and will, all created beings are actually conformed in their being to the Divine Intellect. The predicate *true*, therefore, when applied to creatures, means "made so as to conform to the Divine Intellect." When applied to God Himself, however, the predicate *true* means essentially that God, Who is a subsistent intellect and act of understanding, knows Himself so perfectly that what He is and what He knows of Himself are entirely and completely identical.

But in addition to the Divine Intellect there are also other, contingently existing intelligent beings; and, of these, we are especially concerned with man. Note that only those beings are necessarily conformed to the human intellect which come into being in dependence upon a human agent. In the case of artifacts, *true* means "made so as to conform to the artist's mind." In the case of all other finite things, however, there is no necessary relation of actual conformity to the human intellect. Some things are in fact known by man. With regard to the nature and existence of these things, it is extrinsic and accidental to them that they be in fact known by some man. Therefore, *true* in the sense of "actually conformed to a human mind," when applied to artifacts, is an essential predicate; when applied to natural beings, it is an accidental and extrinsic predicate.

The relation between being and the human intellect can be considered in terms of conformability rather than conformity. By this we mean that whether such things are known or not, they can be known, they are knowable. The relationship of conformability to some created intellect is a necessary one, given the existence of these things and of an intellect, but it is secondary (the primary essential relation is to the Divine Intellect). The relationship of conformability to any given individual created intellect or to any kind of created intellect—for example, that of

man—is contingent or accidental, for it is not necessary that men exist. Applied to creatures, therefore, the term “true” in the sense of conformability means that they are such as can be known by man. Some things, of course, are here and now not actually knowable by man—things hidden from man’s experience within the earth or at the far reaches of the stellar universe or among the multitude of angels. But the reason these things cannot be known at present is some hindrance external to the nature of the things—their lack of contact with us, for example. Hence, we can state what is sometimes called the “principle of intelligibility”—“All things are intelligible.”

We can also ask whether the predicate *true* in the sense of conformability to the human intellect can be applied to God. Prior to our knowledge that God exists we cannot, of course, say that He is true. But now that we know that He exists, it is evident that He can be known by man.

True, in the sense of conformability to some created intellect, is a necessary but secondary predicate of all things. In the sense of conformability to some particular created intellect or to some kind of created intellect, *true* is an accidental and extrinsic predicate.

According to the various meanings of *true* which we have been considering, it is a relative attribute: it describes a thing as related to something else (namely, an intellect). In other words, it denominates a thing from something distinct from it (an intellect), to which it has a relation.¹⁰ Does *true* have any absolute signification? In other words, does it say anything about the being in itself? Yes, because a being to be conformed and conformable to intellect must be of a certain kind. Intelligibility supposes that being has a certain structure. We have previously seen that potency, as such, is not knowable in itself but through act and in relation to act.¹⁷ We have also seen that the first and primary’ of

Recall what was said above, that the relation in question is not something added to being; it is only rationally distinct.

“See above, sec. 40 (4).

all acts is the act of existing. Hence, the primary one among the absolute meanings of *true* is the one which designates the act of existing of a thing:¹⁸ "The *true* is the esse of things." On this basis we can see why every being is true. For being is "that-which-is," "something having an act of existing." The act of existing is intelligible, even if we cannot have a simple apprehension or direct abstractive concept of it. At the very least, we can know in a judgment that a being is. This does not imply that every being is perfectly or completely intelligible to man; it only means that no being is completely unintelligible to man. Therefore, *true*, in its first absolute meaning, designates the basic internal actuality of a being, its act of existing.

Moreover, act is also form, especially substantial form. Hence, a second absolute meaning of transcendental truth is the actual possession of a form and, consequently, of a nature. Again, inasmuch as act is intelligible, the being which possesses an act—that is, a form—is thereby intelligible. Here, however, not all beings are equally true, that is, equally conformable to the human intellect. Sensible things can be directly known by us. But pure forms—the angels and God—cannot be directly known in themselves to the human mind, because it is impossible for us to have an abstractive concept of such forms. Therefore, *true*, in the secondary, absolute sense of the possession of a form or nature, can be predicated of all beings, but in different ways of sensible things, separate substances, and God.

Hence, we can sum up the entire discussion of transcendental truth in this way. The transcendental true is analogous. First, there is the subsistent truth of God Who is pure act, perfectly known to Himself. Then there are the participated truths, which are primarily true inasmuch as beings by participation are conformed to the creative intellect, and secondarily true, as such beings are conformable to some created intellect. In a derived

St. Thomas most often gives among the "absolute" meanings of the *true* the esse of things; but there are also other meanings; cf. for example, "*veritas humanae naturae*," in *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. III, q. 5, arts. 1 and 2.

sense, *true* designates the absolute (that is, nonrelative) perfection of a being, and here, too, there are degrees of truth. That is most true which is pure, subsistent act. That is more or less true which has more or less of act—primarily the act of existing, secondarily other acts, especially substantial form and essence.

The opposite of the true is the false. Being is not, absolutely speaking, false, for that which has, absolutely speaking, no act of existing in any sense is not a being. However, a being may be called false from some limited point of view. For example, when we speak of “false teeth,” we mean “some things which are not really teeth, but have something of the appearance of teeth and perform some of their functions.”

77. The transcendental “good”

The predicate “good” is used in many ways. In its unqualified sense (for example, “John is a good man”), it means “that which is perfect according to its kind.” In this sense of the term “good,” the goodness of a thing is proper to it; and the goodness of one kind of thing is different from the goodness of another kind. For example, a pen is good when it writes well; a race horse is good when it runs fast; a man is good when he has the virtues and other qualities which human nature ought to have. The unqualified “good” is therefore also called the “proper good.” The proper good is clearly not possessed by every thing, for there are bad men, bad bargains, bad food. Moreover, in the beings of our experience, their proper good is a perfection distinct from their substance and so is an accidental perfection. (The proper good of man is studied in ethics or moral philosophy.)

The opposite of the proper good is the evil. Taken concretely, “evil” or “bad” designates some thing which is without (deprived of) some particular good which it should have according to its kind. Taken abstractly, “evil” or “badness” is the privation¹⁰ itself;

¹⁰ Distinguish between privation and the simple absence of something. Privation means “the absence of something which is due, or suitable, or necessary.” On evil as a privation, see Selected Passages, No. 36.

and privation itself is not a real being (just as blindness is not a being) but a being of reason. An evil thing, of course—"evil taken concretely—is a real being, real with the reality of the thing that lacks a good which is due to it according to its nature.

But goodness and evil are not simply absolute predicates, like perfect and imperfect. In the full sense of the term "good," a thing is good when it is not only perfect in its kind but is at the same time an object of appetite, or tendency. Good food, for example, is not merely a material substance with all the accidents suitable to its nature but also one which corresponds to a particular appetite, namely, the biological tendency of a living thing toward that which nourishes it. Similarly, a good race horse is not merely one which exercises the particular activity of running rapidly; that activity is also desired by someone. Again, a good man is not merely one who has certain virtues; he has the virtues he *ought* to have—and *ought* expresses the basic natural tendency of man to be in the condition of possessing such virtues. These examples—similar ones can easily be found—show us that *good* is a perfection for which there is an appetite (tendency) either in the thing itself which possesses or is capable of possessing the perfection or in something else. The goodness of a means inasmuch as it is purely a means is derived entirely from its relation to the good as just described.

The purpose of this analysis of the proper good has been to help to clarify the question, Is every being good? Is good a transcendental? Obviously, these questions cannot be asked about the proper good, since it is a fact of immediate experience that there are evils. We must therefore be asking a question about *good* in some different, even though related, sense.

A thing is unqualifiedly good when it has the perfections proper to its nature or essence and, as so perfected, is the object of some tendency. Suppose, instead of asking about the perfection suited to the *nature* (whether accidental or substantial) of a thing, we ask about the perfection of a being *as being*. Is every being good inasmuch as it is (a being)? In asking this question,

we are asking about the qualified good—that is, about the good with the qualification, “inasmuch as it is (a being).”²⁰

We have seen that God is by His essence; He is the pure and subsistent actuality of being. So it follows that He is absolutely perfect as being. Because He is an intelligent being, He also has an intellectual appetite. It is only natural that His own infinite perfection should be an object of this intellectual tendency, and, therefore, the infinite perfection of God is also infinite goodness.²¹ “Infinite” goodness means goodness without limit, without flaw.

We have seen that God is the cause of the world by creation, through intellect and will. It follows at once that creatures can be named good through the analogy of eminence in causality. Is the goodness of creatures as beings merely an extrinsic denomination,²² or is it also an intrinsic perfection? Recall that the relation in being between God and creatures is proved to be an *intrinsic* analogy of eminence in causality and, therefore, also the analogy of participation. Since God is good inasmuch as He is by His nature, whatever participates in being also and to that same degree participates in goodness. And since every being is either being by essence or being by participation, every being is good.

This answer to the question, “Is every being good?” has been a priori.²⁸ It is possible to approach the transcendental goodness of

²⁰11 the transcendental good, see Selected Passages, No. 35.

“Since the nature of God is identically the act of existing, the transcendental goodness of God is identically His proper goodness. And since God is an intelligent being, His proper goodness is also moral goodness. This identity of perfection is not found in any other being.

““Extrinsic denominations” will be treated more fully later on, hi secs. 94 and 95. Here, it will suffice to define *extrinsic denomination* as “a name and a conception truly applied to one being because of another.” Hence, it is evident that an extrinsic denomination is not a real being: it does not designate an intrinsic or inherent perfection or act. It is an intelligibility.

“The a priori approach to transcendental goodness is not in conflict with the truth previously stated that we have no direct, immediate knowledge of God, that we know Him only through creatures. For in the a priori approach as it is used here, we do begin with an immediate experience; namely, the experience of proper goodness. From this, by way of analogy and negation, we proceed to find transcendental goodness in the fullness of being, which is also an object of tendency.

creatures directly, and this second approach is necessary for a full understanding. Let us repeat that the good is an act or perfection which is the object of some tendency. Every being, in order to *be*, has at least an act of existing, and by this *esse* the being is a being in act. Furthermore, even' being in some sense clings to its own actuality and resists destruction more or less, according to its nature. The tendency of every being to continue in being is evident in living things, particularly in men. One's own death is feared and disliked; even those who voluntarily choose suicide do so under the impression that it is the lesser of two evils. Plants and animals resist death in ways proportioned to their nature and will work very' hard to keep themselves alive for their normal life span (whether this be a few hours or hundreds of years). Nonliving things, too, in their way resist destruction, again more or less according to their particular nature. The impulse to self-preservation is based on the order of actualized potency to its act; more concretely, on the order of actualized essence to the act of existing. Since every being strives to keep itself in act, since being as actualized has a perfection, every being inasmuch as it is is good.

Moreover, there is an order among created beings such that some beings are for others. With regard to very many beings, we know what beings are goods for them, as we have seen above in studying tendency and final causality. Hence, inasmuch as a created being is both perfective of another and the object of the other's tendency, it is good. However, we do not sufficiently know the order of created beings to each other to use this order as an evidence to show that *every* being is good.

What is the relation of the transcendental good to being? The transcendental good is being inasmuch as it is. Consequently, good is not something really distinct from being and added to being but in the real order is identical with being itself. But the conception, *good*, is not identical with the conception, *being*, for the very intelligibility of *good* adds to being the relation to some tendency or appetite. Therefore, the transcendental good adds to

being the relation to appetite and so is distinct from being by a minor distinction of reason.

78. The beautiful²⁴

The way in which we approach the beautiful must be somewhat similar to the way in which we studied the good. Some sensible things are beautiful; others are not. The beauty of one kind of thing is not the same as the beauty' of another; the beauty' of a sunset is not that of a tree; the beauty of a sun-drenched landscape is not that of a painting; the beauty' of a poem is not that of a building. Yet in all cases, proper beauty has a common descriptive note: it is that which pleases when perceived. An analysis of the beautiful object shows at least these elements: an ordered multiplicity and a certain excellence of form and cognoscibility. The experience of beauty also has some common elements: it is both cognoscitive and affective; the type of knowledge involved is akin to contemplation; the type of attitudinal response is rest in the possession by knowledge. Hence, the beautiful seems to be related to both knowledge and appetite, to both intellect and will.

Is there also transcendental beauty'? Is every being beautiful inasmuch as it is? Every' being, inasmuch as it is a being, possesses actuality; all finite beings are made up of an ordered multiplicity' of "parts" or principles—whereas God, Who is the simple actuality of existing, with regard to our knowledge of Him is a virtual ordered multiplicity of unified perfections; every being has at least some splendor of actuality, be it only the act of exist-

²⁴ The study of the beautiful in an introductory book must necessarily be brief.

There are also some analogous perfections (like life, knowledge, understanding, willing), which are similar to the transcendental²⁵. These perfections are not strictly transcendental, for they are not found in all beings, and are not "properties" of being as being. Their similarity lies in their analogy. In its analogous sense, "life" is a special way of existing; knowledge, understanding, and willing are special ways of acting immanently. Note, however, that life, understanding, and willing are also used in univocal senses. These differences are explained in the philosophy of human nature.

ing; and ever}' being can be related to both knowledge and appetite, and in some way we can take pleasure in the knowledge of it. This is the a posteriori approach to transcendental beauty'.

The a priori approach to transcendental beauty' is richer and fuller. We find beauty in created things, and in them beauty is a perfection without any intrinsic limitation or imperfection. Hence, God, the creative cause of all being, must also be beautiful. And any perfection predicated of God must be predicated infinitely, without any limitation, and as identical with His essence and act of existing. Hence, God is subsistent beauty, beauty by essence, infinite beauty' inasmuch as He is. Therefore, all His creatures, which are beings by participation, also possess transcendental beauty by participation. Therefore, every being is beautiful inasmuch as it is, either essentially or by participation.

79. Definitions

A transcendental is a "predicate" and a perfection which transcends all genera and differences.

Tiling (as a scientific term in metaphysics) is that which has an essence or quiddity, and, only by implication, an act of existing.

Something is a thing which is distinct from other things.

A possible is something which could lie or could have been.

A being of reason is an object (an essence or form) whose actuality is the act of being-understood, which, as such, cannot have an act of existing (in the proper sense of that term) but which is understood after the manner of a being.

An *intelligibility* (in Latin, *ratio*) is that which the intellect understands of the meaning of some term. (Tin's is a purely descriptive definition.) In the strict sense, an intelligibility is neither a being of reason (for *what* is understood exists), nor a real being (for it does not exist in the way in which it is known).

The transcendental *one* is that which is actually undivided.

Simple is that which is undivided and undivisible, that which has no parts.

Whole or composite is that which is actually undivided but can be divided, that which has real parts.

Per se one is that which is one of itself, not by an external principle.

Per accidens one is that which is one by inherence.

Accidental one is that which is substantially many and is one by some distinct accident.

Logical truth is the conformity of the mind to the object.

Transcendental truth (ontological truth) is the conformity or the conformability of being to knowledge.

The *good* is that which is desirable. (This is the preliminary, descriptive definition.)

The proper good is some actuality or perfection in relation to the appetite of a certain *kind* of being.

Transcendental goodness is the actuality or perfection of a thing inasmuch as it is the object of some tendency.

Evil, taken concretely, is a being deprived of some particular good.

Evil, taken abstractly, is the privation of a particular good in a subject apt to have that good.

80. Proofs (to be completed)

- A. Every being is one.
- B. Every being is true.
- C. Every being is good.

81. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 11, arts. 1 and 2 (on the meaning of transcendental unity' and its relation to multiplicity), q. 16, arts. 1-6 (on the various meanings of truth, its relation to being and to God), q. 17, arts. 1 and 4 (on falsity and its relation to truth), q. 5, arts. 1-5; q. 6, arts. 1-4 (on goodness, its relation to being; the goodness of God and of creatures); Pt. I-II, q. 94, art. 2 (on the relationship of the various transcendentals, and the analytical [logical] priority of being); *On the Power of God*, q. 7, art. 11, ad 2 (on the order of the transcendentals to each other); *Truth*, q. 1, art. 1 (the meaning of truth); q. 21, arts. 1 and 2 (the meaning of good

and its relation to being); *Contra Gentiles*, Bk. III, chaps. 18, 19, 20, and 24 (good and the will; relation between good and final cause).

St. Augustine, *Confessions*, Bk. 10, chaps. 27, 33-34 (some passages on beauty).

Clifford G. Kossell, S.J., "Principles of St. Thomas's Distinction between the *Esse* and *Ratio* of Relation," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXIV (1946), 28-36; an excellent exposition of what is meant by an "intelligibility."

Jacques Maritain, *Art and Scholasticism*, trans. J. F. Scanlan (New York, Scribner's, 1930), pp. 23-38, 167-172, 161-166; the first two selections deal with beauty and its characteristics; the third with the perception of the beautiful.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

31. *Substance and Accident Contrasted with Beings of Reason*

. . . the quasi-definition of "being" is "something having esse." But substance alone is that which subsists. Accidents, however, are called beings, not because they are, but rather because by them something is; as "whiteness" is said to be, because its subject is white. Hence, [Aristotle] says that accidents are not simply called beings, but beings of being, such as quality and motion.

Nor is it to be wondered at, that accidents are called beings though they are not beings simply, because even privations and negations are said to be somehow beings, as "not-white is," not because not-white has an act of existing, but because a subject is deprived of whiteness. This, therefore, is common to accidents and privations, that being is applied to them by reason of their subject. But they differ in this, that the subject has esse to some extent according to accidents, but according to privations it does not have esse in any sense, but rather is deficient in esse.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. XII, lect.
1 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 2419-
2420).*

32. *The Difference Between Being and Being-known*

It is clear to anyone who carefully considers the arguments of Plato, that he arrived at his erroneous positions, because he believed that the manner of being of the thing understood is like the manner of understanding the thing . . . But this is not necessary. For even if the intellect understands things by this, that it is like to them as far as the intelligible species (by which it is put into act) is concerned; yet it is not necessary that this species be in the intellect according to the way in which it is in the thing understood. For everything which

is in a subject, is, according to the manner of the subject in which it is. Therefore, on account of the very nature of the intellect, which is different from the nature of the thing understood, it is necessary that the mode of understanding by which the intellect understands be different from the mode of being by which the thing exists. For, though that which the intellect understands must be in the thing, it need not be there in the same way.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. I, lect. 10
(ed. Cathala, No. 158).*

33. *The Meaning of "Intelligibility"*

There are three ways in which things are signified by words. For there are some things which according to their entire and complete being are outside the mind, and these are complete beings, like "man" and "stone." There are other things which in no way are outside the mind, like dream-objects and the image of a chimera. There are still other things which have a foundation in reality outside the mind, but the completion of their intelligibility, with regard to what is formal in them, is by the operation of the mind, as is clear in the universals. For "humanity" is something in reality, but does not have the nature of a universal, since there is no humanity common to many outside the mind. But in the way "humanity" is present in the intellect, there is joined to it an intention ["intention" here means "a note or characteristic added to the understood form 'humanity' because of the latter's relation to many things"], according to which it is called a species. Similarly, "time" has a foundation in motion—namely, what is before and after in the motion itself—but with regard to what is formal in time—namely, the measuring [of duration or motion]—it is completed by the operation of the intellect which measures. I make the same distinction with regard to truth. Truth has a foundation in the thing, but its intelligibility is completed by the action of the intellect—when, that is, the thing is apprehended in the way it is. Therefore, the Philosopher says [*Metaphysics*, Bk. VI, 1027b26] that the true and the false are in the mind, but good and evil are in things. Now, in the thing there are its essence and its esse; truth is founded rather on the esse of the thing than on the essence. As the name "being" is given to something from the act of existing, so in the operation of the intellect which takes the esse of the thing as it is (by becoming like to it), the relation of equality is completed, and the intelligibility of truth consists in this relation. Therefore, I assert that the very esse of the thing (as it is in the knowledge of the intellect) is the cause of truth.

*Commentary on the First
Book of the Sentences, dis.
19, q. 5, art. 1.*

An intelligibility (*ratio*), as it is taken here, is nothing other than that which the intellect understands of the meaning of some name. In those things which have a definition, the intelligibility is the definition itself, as the Philosopher says, "The intelligibility signified by the name is the definition" (*Metaphysics*, Bk. IV, 1012a25). But some things have an intelligibility in the present meaning of the term, which have no definition, as (for example) quantity and quality and similar things, which are not defined, because they are the most general genera. Yet, the intelligibility of quality is that which is signified by the name "quality," and this is that by which quality is quality. Hence, it makes no difference whether the things which are said to have an intelligibility have or do not have a definition. Thus, it is clear that the intelligibility of wisdom which is predicated of God, is that which is conceived as the meaning of this noun, although the Divine wisdom itself cannot be defined. Yet the noun *intelligibility* does not mean the conception itself, for this latter is signified by the noun "wisdom," or by some other name of a thing, but it signifies the intention of this conception, just as the noun *definition* signifies an intention, and so also other nouns of second imposition.

From this it is clear . . . how an intelligibility is said to be in reality. For this does not mean that the intention which we signify by the noun *intelligibility*, is in reality, nor even that the conception to which this intention applies is in reality outside the mind—since it is in the mind as in its subject—but it is said to be in the thing, inasmuch as in the thing outside the mind, there is something which corresponds to the conception of the mind, in the way in which that which is signified corresponds to its sign.

*Commentary on the First
Book of the Sentences*, dis.
2, q. 1, art. 3.
Cf. *Responsio ad F. Joann.
Vercellens. de art. 108*, a.
1.

34. *The Transcendental "One"*

"One" . . . is used in two senses. In one way, inasmuch as it is convertible with being, and thus, ever}' thing is one by its essence . . . and "one" does not add anything to being except only the intelligibility of "being undivided." In the second way, "one" is used, inasmuch as it signifies the intelligibility of the first measure, either simply, or in some genus.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics*, Bk. III, lect.
12 (ed. Cathala, No. 501).

For "one" which is convertible with being designates being itself, acidifying the intelligibility of indivision, which, since it is a negation or a privation, does not posit any nature added to being. And thus "one" in no way differs from being in reality, but only in intelligibility. For negation and privation are not beings in the real order, but beings of reason.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. IV, lect. 2
(ed. Cathala, No. 560).*

He says, therefore, that "one" is said to be per se and per accidens. And he shows that we must consider the per accidens one primarily in singular terms, and this in two ways. In one way, there is a per accidens one, according as an accident is compared with a subject; in the other way, according as one accident is compared with another. In both cases, there are three things to consider: one composite, and two simple principles. For if we take the one per accidens according to the comparison of an accident to a subject, we have, for example: first, Coriscus, second, "musically-inclined," third, "the musically-inclined Coriscus." And these three are one per accidens, for "Coriscus" and "musically-inclined" are one in subject. Similarly, when we compare an accident to an accident, there are three things: of which the first is "musically-inclined," the second "just," the third, the "musically-inclined, just Coriscus." And these examples are said to one per accidens, but in different ways.

For "just" and "musically-inclined," which are the two simple principles in the second way, are called "one per accidens," because they happen to one subject. But "musically-inclined" and "Coriscus," which are the two simple principles in the first way, are called one per accidens, because "one of them," that is, "musically-inclined," happens to the other, that is, Coriscus.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. V, lect. 7
(ed. Cathala, Nos. 843-844).*

35. *The Transcendental "Good"*

The good according to its proper intelligibility is a cause, in the way in which a goal is a cause. This is clear, because the good is that which all seek after. But that, to which an appetite [tendency] tends, is the end. Therefore, good, according to its proper intelligibility, is a cause after the manner of causing of an end.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. I, lect. 11
(ed. Cathala, No. 179).*

36. *Evil Is a Privation*

"Evil," like "white," can be said in two ways. For, in one way, when we say "white," we can understand "that which is the subject of whiteness"; in a second way, "white" is "that which is white inasmuch as it is white," that is, the accident itself. In like manner, "evil" can be understood in one way as "that which is the subject of evil," and this is something. In another way, we can understand "evil itself"; this is not anything, but is the privation of something good.

To see this, we must realize that *good*, properly speaking, is "something inasmuch as it is appetible"; for, according to the Philosopher (*Ethics*, Book I), those philosophers gave an excellent definition of *good* who said, "Good is that which all seek"; *evil*, however, is said to be "that which is opposed to good." Therefore, it is necessary that evil is that which is opposed to the appetible as such. That which is opposed to the appetible as such cannot be something, for three reasons: First, because the appetible is an end, and the order of ends is like the order of agents. For, if an agent is higher and more universal, the end for which it acts is a more universal good, for every agent acts for an end and for a good. . . . Since in efficient causes there is no infinite regress—for we must arrive at one first agent which is the universal cause of being—it is necessary that there is some universal good to which all other goods are ordered. The reason is that, since the appetible moves the appetite, and the first mover must be unmoved, the first and universal appetible must necessarily be the first and universal good, which does all things because of its love of itself. Consequently, as whatever there is in the real order must derive from the first and universal cause of being, so, whatever there is in the real order must derive from the first and universal good. But that which comes from the first and universal good can only be a particular good, just as what comes from the first and universal cause of being is some particular being. Therefore, whatever is something in the real order must necessarily be some particular good. But that which is good cannot, inasmuch as it is, be opposed to good. Hence, finally, evil, inasmuch as it is evil, cannot be something in the real order, but is the privation of some particular good, inhering in some particular good.

The second reason demonstrates the same truth. Whatever is in the real order has some inclination and tendency toward that which is suited to it. But that which is appetible is thereby good. Therefore, whatever is in the real order is proportioned to some good. Evil, however, as such is not proportioned to good but rather is opposed to it. Therefore, evil is not something in the real order. But even if evil were some thing, it would have no tendency, nor be the object of any tendency; hence, it would have no action or change, because nothing acts or is moved except on account of the appetite for some good.

The third reason leads to the same truth. Being itself most especially is that which is desired. That is why we find that every thing naturally tends to conserve its being, and avoids what destroys it, and resists destruction as it is able. Therefore, being itself, inasmuch as it is appetible, is good. Therefore, it is necessary that evil which is entirely opposed to good is also opposed to the very act of being. But that which is opposed to the act of being cannot be something. Hence, I conclude that that which is evil itself is not something; that to which evil happens is something, inasmuch as evil deprives its subject only of some particular good (just as blindness itself is not something, but that to which blindness happens is something).

De Malo, q. 1, art. 1.

CHAPTER XI

The Predicaments: Substance and Supposit

82. The predicaments in general

The predicaments, or categories, are the highest (that is, the most general) classes of things known. From the point of view of Aristotelian logic, all predicates are attributes. From the point of view of grammar, predicates could be classified as substantive or adjectival. But when we are studying the predicaments, we are not studying the operation of our mind by which we join one concept to another, much less the structure of verbal propositions. Of course, both logic and grammar will be to some extent useful tools. But we are going to investigate the various ways of determining the mode (or way) of being of things in relation to our knowledge.¹ This consideration we shall call “predicament[al] being.”²

To locate the present discussion, it will be helpful to consider in summary form the matter to be investigated in this and the following two chapters. The predicaments are *intelligibilities* derived from being in its first and proper sense (or, “metaphysical being,” “that-which-is”). Substance is derived by total abstraction, accidents by total and formal abstraction. With the exception of quantity and quality, the predicamental accidents also involve formalization. Each of these predicamental intelligibilities

¹ See also, Selected Passages, No. 38; this is an extremely important group of texts.

² See Selected Passages, No. 37.

³ It may be advantageous to review sec. 74 on intelligibilities or to re-read Selected Passages, No. 33.

is considered as an entity, that is, as analogous to an individual real being. Thus, we can speak *predicamentally* of substance and its esse and accidents and their esses, although in the real order there is but one esse of the substance together with its accidents. Hence, in relation to extramental beings, the predicaments are secondary analogates by the analogy of proportion. Among the predicaments—because in the real order accidents have esse only through substance, and predicamental accidents are by their nature modifications of substance—these accidents are secondary analogates of predicamental being; substance is the primary analogate of predicamental being.

To facilitate our understanding of the predicaments (predicamental being) and to establish their place in metaphysics, it is necessary to recall briefly some of the discoveries we have already made about being. Being, in its first and proper sense, is that which *is*, or any thing having an act of existing (esse). As evidenced by the existents of our experience, being in this primary sense comprises two principles: the “that-which (-is),” or “thing-principle” and the principle by which the thing exists, the “esse-principle.” This pair of principles—though not the first to be discovered—is the most basic potency-act relationship of being. In this relationship, the thing-principle is, of course, potential, and the esse-principle is its correlated act. Primarily, then, the thing-principle is a whole principle which exists by its proper esse. It is an entire individual of a definite kind with all its components and modifications and all its capacities.

As the existents of our experience show, the thing-principle is itself a composite of various other principles, namely, matter and substantial form and substance and accidents. These, as we have seen, constitute other potency-act correlations within a being. They are rightly called principles of being, precisely because they are components of the entire thing-principle whose proper act is esse. For this reason, too, they are rightly called beings according to an analogy of proportion. But, let us note, they are so called only by reference to being in its first and proper sense; that is to

say, because they, as intrinsic principles, in some way contribute to the structure of being (in that sense).

Thus, we see that being, metaphysically taken, has many meanings. By analogy of proportion the whole thing-principle and its intrinsic components are called beings. This whole thing-principle presents its complex make-up to us as follows: (1) The experienced thing presents itself as directly ordered to *esse*; and according to this presentation, it is called substance. As designating this presentation "substance" means "that to which *esse* belongs in itself." (2) The same thing-principle also presents itself as a principle of a certain kind, or essence (nature). Our understanding of this presentation involves both natural (total) abstraction and judgment (for example, "This is a man").⁴ (3) The same thing-principle presents itself as basically composed of primary matter and substantial form. What this presentation involves has already been analyzed.⁵ (4) The same thing-principle presents itself to us as intrinsically modified in various ways. These modifications are called accidents, and the thing-principle, inasmuch as it is a potency for these accidents, is called their substantial subject or, simply, their substance. A substance according to this presentation means "a subject of accidents." All these presentations of being are *metaphysical* as has been indicated.

Bearing these distinctions in mind, we are now in a position to consider the nature of predicamental being and its relation to metaphysical being, which we have just summarily considered. First of all, we should note that it is being in the sense of *thing-principle* (and so being by an analog¹ of proportion) which furnishes the foundation of predicamental being. It is precisely the thing-principle *as a principle of being in its first and proper sense* that gives rise to the predicaments. This is the basic fact

¹ Men do not commonly perform acts of simple apprehension. Usually simple apprehensions are (virtual) parts or functions of judgments. Only a relatively sophisticated person makes simple apprehensions. On this point, see C. P. Klubertauz, *The Philosophy of Human Nature* (New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953), pp. 173-177.

² See above, secs. 32 and 33.

which gives the predicaments their rightful place in metaphysics.

From the thing-principle, as we have observed, we can by means of total abstraction obtain an intelligibility which we call an "absolute nature" (for example, man, horse, tree).⁶ This absolute nature can be predicated of various individual existents. It expresses their substantial nature. Substance as obtained in this way and used as a predicate is called "predicamental substance" or "second substance." Predicamental substance, thus, is nothing else than any absolute substantial nature predicable of real individual existents.

Again, the tiling-principle presents itself as modified in various ways. Some of these modifications pertain to it precisely as this individual, while others pertain to it by reason of its nature, or the *kind* of thing it is. These modifications are called accidents. By means of formal abstraction, we can consider these modifications (accidents) in themselves apart from any substance. Indeed, we can consider them *as if* they were substances (*per modum substantiae*); and it is precisely as considered in this way that they are placed in the predicaments. We will take up the consideration of accidents in some detail in the two following chapters.

One further general consideration is necessary. Because predicamental being is so called by an intrinsic analogy of proportion to metaphysical being, it is traditional to ask about the principles of predicamental being. As we have seen, the analysis of metaphysical being can be partially represented in a diagram like the following:

$$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{essence}^7 \\ \text{esse} \end{array} \right\} \begin{array}{l} \text{I substance} \\ \text{I accident} \end{array}$$

By an analogy of proportion—this time an extrinsic analogy, inasmuch as our mind *considers* predicamental being according to

⁶See above, secs. 11, 18, and 33.

⁷This is not the strict sense of *essence* but a wide one; see above, sec. 34.

the model provided by extramental being—predicamental being is *considered* as composed in the following way:

	i	essence
substance	j	
	I	esse
(predicamental) being -		
	r	essence
accident	I	esse

The similarity-in-difference between these two analyses has caused much confusion, and it will be necessary that we take great care in the discussion of both substance and accident. We will take up the point of the "esse" of predicamental being in detail in the next chapter. For the moment, however, let us carefully note that the understanding of substance as composed of essence and esse does turn out to be quite similar to the nature of metaphysical substance which has been made in this section. However, there are differences. Esse, as considered to be a principle of predicamental substance, is called "substantial esse," or "esse without qualification." Taken this way, substantial esse is an intelligibility, not an immediate principle of metaphysical being.

Why is the analysis of the principles of being (as we made it, for example, in Chapter V) not sufficient? This analysis is sufficient to understand real things in the real order, but not sufficient to enable us to deal with them intellectually. In examining the structure of real things in the real order, we have found that the essence (the thing-principle, *that-which-is*), is composed of two principles, a principle by which the being is something having esse in itself (substance), and other principles (accidents) by which that something is variously modified. When we consider substance and accident as principles *by* which something has esse in itself and *by* which something is modified, we are trying to understand them according to the manner in which things exist. Such an understanding is difficult and roundabout—a fact which is manifested by the awkward circumlocutions necessary to express it. On the other hand, it is very easy to understand and deal

with these principles when they are conceived as things; in other words, it is easy to deal with the principles of tilings by means of intelligibilities. When we classify these intelligibilities according to what they represent, we have the predicaments. The predicaments, therefore, are conceived in the manner proper to the human understanding. Since what the predicaments intelligibly contain directly relates to the real order, they are "first intention" predicates.⁸ But we must be careful not to confuse the manner in which they are conceived with the ontological mode of being which they ultimately signify.

A "thing" can share in being in ten basically different ways,⁹ inasmuch as

it has being simply or substantially	Substance
it has being in a qualified manner or accidentally.....	
on account of something intrinsic to the thing	
which is absolute	
and follows upon matter	Quantity
or follows upon form	Quality
or relative, that is, ordering one to another.....	Relation
or on account of something extrinsic to the thing	
partially	
of which the tiling is principle.....	Action
or of which it is the term	
(that is, term of another's activity)	Passion
wholly extrinsic	
as measure of the thing	

⁴ A "first intention" is a knowledge (concept, judgment, reasoning) about some object, either a real thing or something conceived after the manner of a real thing, and referring to the kind of existence proper to such an object. It is contrasted with "second intentions." A second intention is a knowledge about some object according as it is understood and referring to the kind of being that an object has in a mind, that is, to its intelligible nature as understood. A second intention is called "second," because we must first know an object before we can think about our knowledge of that object.

Among the second intentions there are the "predicables" spoken of in logic. The predicables are classes of predicates according to the intelligible relations they have to subjects. The predicables are genus, difference, species, property, accident. Because they are second intentions, the predicables are beings of reason.

"For a fuller presentation of the derivation of the predicaments, see Selected Passages, No. 39.

according to time	When
according to place	
simply	Where
considering also the order of	
the parts among themselves.....	Situs
as joined to a thing according to	
some human purpose.....	Habitus

To understand the predicaments in particular, it may help to look at some sample sentences employing the predicaments. The order of these examples will follow the order of the predicaments as given above. (1) "John Smith is a *man*"; "John Smith is *rational*." (2) "My dog, Rover, is *large*." (3) "The house is *white* and *square*." (4) "John Doe is the *son of* Richard Doe." (5) "John Doe is *building* a house." (6) "This house is *being built* by John Doe." (7) "That manuscript is *ancient*." (8) "Yesterdays storm was *local*" (9) "The broken step is the *bottom* one." (10) "That man is warmly *clothed*"; "The work horses are *shod*."

All the accidental predicaments are *denominations*,¹⁰ that is to say, they are understood as expressing the subject (that which is) under some formal determination. They do not express a part or principle of the subject, for, if they did, they could not be predicated of the subject directly. But, though all the predicaments are understood after the manner of forms, in the thing itself they do not all have the same mode of being. Substance, as the principle by which the thing has subsistence, is a composite of matter and form. Quantity and quality, as principles by which a thing is quantified and qualified, are forms or at least quasi forms, which are inherent perfections of the thing itself. But the other predicaments, though also understood as forms, are not forms in themselves, though some of them are acts of, and inherent in, the subject, while others are more or less extrinsic to the thing which is.

83. Substance

Real being manifests itself to us in our experience as something which exists in itself and is variously modified, for example, "this

¹⁰ On this point, see Selected Passages, No. 40.

brown horse." That principle of being, which we find in real being, by which that real being (exists) *in itself* and not in another and which therefore can properly be said to be, is substance. In all our experience of real beings, even if we understand no more about them than can be expressed in the words, "This is," we have already implicitly reached substance. For that which we designate by the word "this" exists in itself. We may be ignorant of, or mistaken about, what the substance is, but at least we know it as substance, implicitly. If someone were to imagine that he could directly experience an accident without experiencing substance, he would involve himself in a contradiction. For an accident is that principle of being to whose nature it belongs to be in another. Hence, to say, "We can experience that which is in another without experiencing the other in which it is," is a contradiction.¹

Note that the word substance and its primitive meaning refer directly to "a permanent subject of accidental changes." But by reflection and analysis we see that this is a superficial description; we see that the ultimate subject of accidental change has to have an act of existing in itself, whereas not everything which is in itself necessarily has to be a subject of change. Hence, we define substance as that to whose nature it belongs to be in itself (not in another subject).

If we ask about the divisions or kinds of substance, substance can be divided in various ways. The substances we know are composite substances, made up of principles related to each other as act and potency (that is, matter and form); the contrary of composite substance would be simple substance, one not divisible into substantial principles or parts. The substances which are found in our immediate experience are material substances; the contrary of this would be spiritual substance which contains no

¹ If, by a miracle, in a particular case sensible qualities exist in quantity which has an act of existing after the manner of a substance, our experience is not thereby faulty, though we may make the mistake of *judging* that in this case quantity itself is in a subject (as in the nature of accidents). See below, sec. 90.

matter. It would therefore be a simple, or incomposite, substance (for example, an angel).¹²

Sometimes writers on philosophy speak of complete and incomplete substance; by complete substance they mean substance as we have been speaking of it; by incomplete substance they mean the substantial principles, matter and form. Finally, there is the distinction into "first" and "second" substance. "First" substance is the singular substance which exists as such in the real order (John Doe, Citation). First substance is never a predicate; it is not in a subject but is the subject itself. "Second" substance is the substance which is a predicate (man, horse); it does not exist as such in the real order, for it is an absolute nature which is abstracted from individuality. It is called "second" substance, because it presupposes the existence of first substances in the real order of which it can be predicated.¹³

84. Supposit and person

First substance is not a predicament at all, because it is never a predicate. (Grammatically, the subject of a sentence may be placed after a verb, but we are not dealing with grammar here; we are dealing with the thing which is known.) The first substance is the singular substance which exists. When we want to designate the being precisely as an existing, substantial, complete individual, we call it a "supposit." To stress the fact that the supposit is a complete individual, not something common to many (like second substance) or just a part (not an integral part, like a hand, or an essential part, like the body of a living thing), we say that the property of a supposit is "incommunicability."

N.B. Distinguish the supposit as spoken of in metaphysics (the incommunicable first substance) from the supposit spoken of in logic

"Note however, that spiritual substance is not in the predicament of substance. When we say, "An angel is a substance," the term and conception substance is used analogously not univocally. See Selected Passages, Nos. 24 and 28.

"See Selected Passages, No. 41.

(the ultimate subject of predication). The supposit of logic is a second intention; it is considered as receiving predicates. The supposit in logic may be a thing (Peter, a tree); it may be a collection (three men, a flock); it may be an abstraction (humanity) or a being of reason (nothing).

The traditional definition of a supposit is "a distinct subsistent individual in a particular nature." The terms "distinct" and "individual" are used to exclude the communication of a nature to an individual or another supposit. The term "subsistent" is used to mean "something which exists with its own proper and proportionate act of existing." What then is the difference between an individual thing and a supposit? Ordinarily and naturally, an individual being has its own proper act of existing, even though there is a real distinction between the nature or essence and the act of existing. But the term "individual thing" only connotes an act of existing, while the term "supposit" explicitly means "having its own proper act of existing." A technical term sometimes used for "supposit" is the word "hypostasis."

The supposit in a rational nature has a special term, namely, "person." A person, therefore, from the point of view of metaphysics, is a "rational supposit," that is, "a distinct subsistent individual in a rational nature." Personality, therefore, namely, that (quasi form) by which a person is precisely a person, is the proper act of existing proportioned to a rational nature. In other words, a human being is a person by having his own act of existing.

N.B. Distinguish this metaphysical meaning of person and personality from the everyday and psychological meanings of those terms. The everyday meanings can easily be found in a dictionary. The meaning of "personality" in the science of psychology can be expressed thus: "the sum total of knowledge, attitudes, habits, ways of acting, and so forth, formed into a single pattern." ¹⁴

¹⁴ Cf. Francis L. Hannon, *Principles of Psychology* (Milwaukee, Bruce, 1951), pp. 595-597.

85. Digression on the backgrounds of the
problem of personality

Why distinguish between a person and an individual rational nature, since as was said above the individual nature of a being ordinarily and naturally has its own proper act of existing? Historically, the problem arises from a theological consideration. According to Christian theology, Jesus Christ is a Divine Person (namely, the Second Person of the Blessed Trinity), who became man without ceasing to be God; in other words, he assumed a human nature. Obviously, Christ did not assume universal human nature but a singular human nature, as singular and sensible as that of any man. But it cannot be said that Christ was a human person, for then he would be two persons, one of which was God, the other an ordinary man. Hence, there is one case of a singular, individual human nature, with an act of existing, which is not a human person. In trying to work this problem out, theologians have made many efforts in different directions: for example, that personality is a double negation of being actually assumed and being able to be assumed; a single negation, of being assumed; a “mode” which is some kind of form really distinct from the nature. The simplest, most straightforward explanation is the one given above.

86. Definitions

Predicamental being is the thing-principle of extramental (metaphysical) being considered as a whole in relation to our knowledge. It is divided into the ten predicaments. (The thing-principle is “that-which [-is]”; it is “being” by an analogy of proportion to metaphysical being.)

Metaphysical being is being in its first and proper sense: “that-which-is.”

A *predicament* (category) is one of the highest classes or

genera of things known. For example, substance, quantity, quality.

A predicable is a predicate considered precisely as predicated, according to its relationship to the subject. It is a second intention. For example, "man as a species."

A substance is that by which a being has esse in itself. (This is a definition of substance as a principle of metaphysical being.)

A substance is that which properly and in the first place is said to be. (This is a definition of predicamental substance.) For example, "John is a *man*."

An accident is that by which a being exists in some modified way. (This is a definition of accident as a principle of metaphysical being.)

An accident is that whose being is inherence (in a subject). (This is a definition of predicamental accident.)

First substance is the singular existing substance.

Second substance is the absolute nature which is predicated as substance.

A supposit is a distinct, subsistent individual in a particular nature, whose property it is to be incommunicable.

A person is a rational supposit.

Personality, that by which a human individual is a person, is the proper act of existing proportioned to a human nature.

Hypostasis is another name for supposit or person.

87. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 3, art. 6 (substance and accident in creatures and in God), q. 29, arts. 1 and 2 (the meaning of "person"), q. 50, art. 1 (the nature of a pure form); q. 30, art. 4 (how the term "person" is said of the Persons in God); Pt. III, q. 2, art. 2 (the Hypostatic Union), q. J7, art. 2 (Christ as one being according to esse); *On Being and Essence*, chap. 2, par. 1-3 (meaning of "essence" in sensible things); *On the Power of God*, q. 2, art. 2, ad 2 (relation of one predicament to another), q. 7, art. 3 (on substance and genus).

Etienne Gilson, *Spirit of Mediaeval Philosophy*, trans. A. H. C. Downes (New York, Scribner's, 1936), pp. 191-206.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

37. *The Meaning of "Predicamental Being"*

The term "being," inasmuch as it signifies the thing to which esse belongs, thus signifies essence, and is divided into the ten kinds. But it is not divided univocally, since esse does not belong to all these kinds in the same way, but it belongs to substance per se, to the other, in other ways.

Quodlibet II, art. 3.

"Being" which is divided by the ten predicaments signifies the natures of the ten kinds according as they are in act or in potency.

Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. X, lect. 3
(ed. Cathala, No. 1982).

38. *Predicamental Being Compared with Being-known*

Being is used in two ways [St. Thomas does not say *only* two]. . . . In one way it signifies the essence of a thing, and is divided into the ten predicaments. . . . In another way, it signifies the truth of a composition.

Contra Gentiles, Bk. III,
chap. 9.

Being is used in two ways. In one way it signifies the nature of the ten predicaments, and in this sense neither evil nor any other privation is "being" or "something." In another way [it signifies] the answer to the question, "Is it?" and in this sense evil is, as also blindness is.

De Malo, q. 1, art. 1, ad 19.

Being is used in two ways. In one way, it signifies the entity [entitos] of a thing, as it is divided into the ten predicaments, and in this sense it is coextensive with "thing." In this sense, no privation is a being, and consequently neither is evil. In another way, being signifies the truth of a proposition which consists in a composition, whose characteristic note is the verb *is*, and this is the being with which we answer the question, "Is it?" Thus, we say that blindness is in the eye . . .

Summa Theologiae, Pt. I,
q. 48, art. 2, ad 2.

39. *The Derivation of the Ten Predicaments*

Being is divided into the ten predicaments, not univocally, as a genus is divided into species, but according to a different way of

being. But the ways of being are proportional to the ways of predicating. For when we predicate one thing of something else, we say, "This is that," and so the ten kinds of being are called ten predicaments.

Predication is done in three ways. The first way is, when something pertaining to the essence of a thing is predicated of a subject, as when I say, "Socrates is a man," or, "Man is an animal," and in this way there is the predicament of substance. The second way is that by which something, which is not of something's essence, but inheres in it, is predicated of that thing. That which inheres either pertains to the matter of the subject, and thus there is the predicament of quantity, for quantity properly follows upon matter. . . . Or, that which inheres follows the form, and thus there is the predicament of quality. Therefore, the qualities are founded upon quantity, as color on surface, and figure on lines or surfaces. Or, that which inheres is with regard to another, and thus there is the predicament of relation. For when I say, "Man is a father," nothing absolute is predicated of man but a regard [respect], which is in man to something outside him. The third way of predicating is, when something extrinsic to that thing is predicated of it after the manner of a denomination. For it is as denominations that the intrinsic accidents are predicated of substance; we do not say, "Man is whiteness," but, "Man is white."

But to be denominated from something extrinsic is found to some extent commonly in all things, and to some extent especially in those which pertain only to man. Now, something is commonly denominated from something extrinsic, either according to the intelligibility of cause, or according to that of measure (for something is denominated "caused" and "measured" from something extrinsic). Since there are four kinds of causes, two of them, that is, matter and form, are parts of the essence. Consequently, the predication which takes place according to these two principles, pertains to the predicament of substance; for example, if we say, "Man is rational," and "Man is corporeal." But the final cause does not cause anything separately from the agent. For the end is a cause, inasmuch as it moves the agent. Therefore, there remains only the efficient cause from which something can be denominated as from something extrinsic. Thus, therefore, inasmuch as something is denominated from the agent, there is the predicament of passion, for "to undergo" [páîti] is nothing other than to receive something from an agent. But, conversely, according as something is denominated an agent from an effect, there is the predicament of action. For action is the act from the agent in something else, as was said above.

A measure may be extrinsic or intrinsic. An intrinsic [measure], for example, is the proper length of something, or its width, or depth; from these, therefore, something is denominated as from an intrinsic

inherent, and so they pertain to the predicament of quantity. But the extrinsic measures are time and place. Inasmuch as something is denominated from time, there is the predicament "when"; and inasmuch as something is denominated from place, there are the predicaments "where" and "situs" (which adds to "where" the order of parts in place). (But such a distinction was not necessary with regard to time, since the order of parts in time is involved in the very intelligibility of time, for time is the numbering of motion according to the prior and the posterior.) Thus, therefore, something is said to be *when* or *where* by denomination from time or place.

Finally, there is a special denomination with reference to men. For in other animals, nature has sufficiently supplied the things which pertain to the preservation of life, such as horns for defence, a thick and hairy' hide for covering, claws for cutting without being hurt, and so on. And so, when such animals are said to be armed or clothed or shod, in a way they are not denominated from something extrinsic, but from some of their parts. Consequently, these predicates are referred in them to the predicament of substance, as if we were to say' that "Man is handed," or "footed." But such parts could not be given to man by nature, both because they' are not suited to the delicacy of his bodily constitution, and because of the many kinds of activities which are suitable to man inasmuch as he possesses reason, to which determined instruments could not be adapted by nature. But in place of all such instruments, man has reason, by' which he prepared exterior things for himself, in place of the parts which animals have intrinsically. Hence, when man is said to be armed, or clothed, or shod, he is denominated from something extrinsic, which does not have the intelligibility of a cause nor of a measure. Hence, this is a special predicament, and is called "habitus." But it is to be noted, that this predicament is attributed to other animals, not as they' are considered in their nature, but as they' come into human use, as if we say that "A horse is trapped, or saddled, or armed."

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Physics, Bk. III, lect. 5.*

40. *The Predicaments as Denominations*

[Aristotle] says that there must be something of which all forms are predicated, on the condition that we understand this subject . . . to be a different quiddity' and essence.

We must note that what has just been said is not to be understood of univocal predication according to which genera are predicated of the species which are defined by' the genera. For "animal" and "man" [as predicated of each other] are not essentially distinct. But we must

understand this of denominative predication, as when "white" is predicated of "man." For "white" and "man" are essentially distinct.

. . . denominative predication, in the way in which accidents are predicated of substance. For this proposition, "Man is white," is true, but not, "Man is whiteness," nor "Humanity is whiteness." In the same way, the proposition, "This material thing is a man," is true, but not, "Matter is man," nor, "Matter is humanity." The very fact of concrete or denominative predication shows, that, as substance is essentially distinct from accidents, so matter is essentially distinct from substantial forms.

*Commentary on the Seventh
Book of the Metaphysics, lect.
2 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 1287-
1289).*

41. *The Meaning of "Substance"*

And first he posits that there are said to be substances existing in the real order, some of which are admitted by all, namely, the sensible substances, such as the earth and the water and other elements, and likewise, according to the order of nobility and perfection, plants and animals and their parts, and finally the heavens, and their parts. . . .

He posits the ways of taking "substance" according to the acceptance of reason. . . . one of which is that "substance" is called the quiddity of some natural substance and this is nothing other than the whatness of a natural thing.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. VIII, lect.
I (ed. Cathala, Nos. 1683-
1684).*

"Substance" is used in two senses. In one way, it means the supposit in the genus of substance, which is called "first substance" and "hypostasis," to which it properly belongs to subsist. In the other way, substance means "what a thing is," which is also called the nature of the thing. . . . Therefore it is said in the *Predicaments*, that second substances, which are genera and species, do not mean "this something," which is a subsisting substance, but they mean "what sort of a thing," that is, a nature in the genus of substance.

Thus, therefore, the Philosopher proved above, that "one" and "being" do not signify a substance which is this something, but we must seek for something which is one and being. In the same way, we seek something which is man or animal, like Socrates or Plato. Finally, he showed that these terms signify the natures of the tilings of which

they are predicated, and not something else added like accidents. For in this, the common terms differ from accidents, though it is common to both common terms and accidents not to be tins something, because common terms signify the very nature of suppositis; but accidents do not, but rather they signify some added nature.

Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. X, lect. 3
(ed. Cathala, Nos. 1979-
1980).

CHAPTER XII

Accidents in General: Quantity and Quality

88. The nature of accidents

The investigation of predicamental accident is a further development of our study of predicamental being. To help us to locate this study properly we will summarily reconsider what we already know about accidents.

The thing-principle of (metaphysical) being designates the whole individual which possesses the act of existing. This thing-principle manifests itself as a substance inasmuch as an existent is a whole directly ordered to *esse*, is of a certain kind, can be subject to changes and modifications. Again, the thing-principle manifests itself as modified in various ways, some of which come and go, others of which are permanent; some of which pertain to the individual as such, others of which belong to the individual because of the kind of thing it is. These modifications are called "accidents." An accident, then, is that which is in another as in a real subject, *by which* that subject is (not simply, but) in a modified way; the proper character of accident is that of a real principle *by which* the thing-principle of finite being is constituted; tins principle is really distinct from its coprinciple, substance.¹

Secondly, accident is a direct principle of predicamental being. As we have seen briefly,² the analysis of predicamental being gives us the division into predicamental substance and predicamental accident. Predicamental substance is the absolutely con-

¹ See above, secs. 30 and 31.

^{*} See above, sec. 82.

sidered nature according to which a real individual thing exists in itself. Predicamental accident is a denomination predicable of real individual existents because of the modifications which these existents manifest to us. As a denomination, the predicamental accident is taken *concretely*; for example, "white," "tall." The concrete accidents implicitly include their subjects; for example, "white" implicitly includes (some) subject. But by formal abstraction, we can consider the accident without its subject; for example, "whiteness," "tallness." In this abstraction, we use a manner of understanding and speaking about the abstracted accident *as if* it were a substance and a real thing (*per modum substantiae*).³

Hence, accidents can be thought about predicamentally and spoken of in two ways. (1) Taken concretely, as direct predicates (for example, "white"), all the accidents are predicated as forms inhering in a subject. Taken in this way, they implicitly include the subject. (2) Taken abstractly (for example, "whiteness"), the accidents no longer include the subject. Because the concrete accident explicitly includes the accident and implicitly includes the substance, it is a compound (a *per accidens* unit)⁴ that cannot be placed in any predicament. Only the abstract accident can be placed in a predicament (for example, of quantity, of quality). As abstract, the accidents are not predicated directly of any subject but only indirectly (*in obliquo*). For example, we predicate a concrete accident directly when we say, "John is short"; but to predicate the abstract accident of John, we must add a word which relates the accident to him, as, "John has shortness." But note that when we think of an abstract accident in itself or use it as an indirect predicate, we deal with it as if it were a substance or thing.

The predicamental accidents are understood as forms and dealt with after the manner of substances. Consequently, we also refer an essence and an act of existing to them, and we designate this

³ On this point, see Selected Passages, No. 44.

⁴ See above, sec. 75.

act of existing as an "accidental esse." As we saw above, being in its first and proper sense is constituted by the two principles of esse and essence, and the latter in turn is constituted by substance and accident. We also saw that predicamental being is analogously divided first into substance and accident and that these principles, in turn, are divided into substantial essence (essence in the strictest sense) and substantial esse, and accidental essence and accidental esse.⁵

Predicamental being is divided into substance and accident. Of these two principles, substance is being by itself, or by essence. Hence, when we are strictly speaking of predicamental substance as a principle of predicamental being, its substantial esse is our way of considering it as real. Thus, "man" is a predicamental substance; if we want to assert it as real, we say, for example, "Man is a substance or a nature." (This is *per se* predication.) Therefore, we can consider substantial essence and substantial esse as merely different considerations, for substance is predicamental being by itself.

But predicamental accident is not being by itself. By itself, or by its essence, the predicamental accident is abstract, and, as abstract, it cannot truly be signified to be—it is not true that "Whiteness is" all by itself. We can say, "Whiteness is," only inasmuch as it is related to, and dependent upon, substance; that is, it is true that "Whiteness is" only in the sense that "Some things are white by whiteness." Hence, predicamental accident is *said to be*, not simply but secondarily, in dependence upon substance. Of itself, it is not predicamental being, but it shares in the esse which is attributed to substance. From this point of view, accident is (predicamental) being analogously with substance by the analogy of participation.⁶ Therefore, it is also true

•See the diagram above, sec. 82; see also, *Selected Passages*, No. 43.

•The analogy of participation in predicamental being is somewhat different from the analogy of participation in being in its proper sense. When we say, "God is being by essence, creature is being by participation," we mean that God's being and the creatures' being are really distinct. When we say, "Substance is predicamental being by essence, accident is

that the accidental esse is a completely different intelligibility from that of the accidental essence. The essence of an accident is the particular kind of modification it is;⁷ its esse is an "inesse" or an inherence in a subject? Thus, when we want to give the formal definition of a real accident, we begin by saying, "That which . . . even though in the real order an accident is not a being or even a thing. Only the modified being properly exists, and the modification is a principle *by which* something is in some way or other. Further, the *is* which is attributed to the abstracted accident in its definition is not an existential act in the proper sense, for, if it were, the abstract accident would be a being in the real order.⁸ When we understand an abstracted accident after the manner of a substance (for example, "whiteness"), and wish to signify that accident as real, we *attribute* the act of existing to it. What does this attribution rest on? It rests on the fact that for an accident to be real in the way corresponding to its nature, it must be united to an existing thing as act to the potency which is substance, and by that union the

predicamental being by participation," we do not attribute the same kind of distinct being to the accident as the substance has. Nevertheless, the *manner* of predication is the same.

Because many Thomists have not distinguished between being in its proper sense and predicamental being, they have said that substance and accident are analogous according to the analogy of proper proportionality (substance is to its esse as accident is to its own esse). It is true that there are several reasons for making this mistake. First, as we shall see, there is no other way in which we can *signify* an accident as real except by attributing to it an esse—we say, "It is"; but what is the meaning of "is" in this usage? Secondly, there is a perfectly correct way in which we can speak of an "accidental esse," as we shall also see; but the fact that we *consider* accidental esse as other and distinct from substantial esse is not by itself a proof that there are two varieties of existential act. Only a latent Platonism will attribute to the real order all the structures and distinctions found in the inind.

In the proper way of understanding accident, the abstract accident (for example, "whiteness") has no existential act at all; the concrete accident (for example, "white") includes in its meaning the subject of existential act and so "has" an existential act, not of itself but by reason of the subject which is included.

⁷ On the meaning of *essence* in accidents, see Selected Passages, No. 43.

⁸ See also, Selected Passages, No. 45.

* Cf. Selected Passages, No. 42.

accident “has” an act of existing, namely, the act of existing of the being whose modification it is.

Because an accident does not have its own proper distinct act of existing, it is not a being in the proper and first sense of that word. St. Thomas sometimes says that an accident is not a being but pertains to being (*magis entis quam ens*—it is rather *of* a being than a being) and that it can be called “the being of a being” (*ens entis*).

Note that accident is first of all an “addition” to substance in the order of essence. We can, as we have seen, talk of an “accidental esse” to indicate that a particular accident is modifying some thing which actually is. We can even say that the “accidental esse” adds to the substantial esse of a thing. To be learned is to have more being than to be without learning, though learning is “only” an accident. What we should understand by such expressions is not that another really distinct act of existing has been added to the act of existing of the substance but that the act of existing of the man (taken concretely in the real order) has now been extended, enlarged to be the act not only of the substance but also of the modification “learning.” This is merely a particular application of the theorem, “Act and potency are proportioned to each other.” If that-which-is (substance 4-accidents) is really more than it was before, then the act of existing is really more than it was, not in reference to itself but in reference to the increase of the potency whose act it is.

If we keep this in mind, we will not be tempted to think of accident and substance in terms of a pin and pincushion or of clothes and the man. An accident is really distinct from the substance, but it combines with the substance to form a composite subject (that-which-is) for the unique act of existing. Hence, an accidental modification of a being may be a profound modification of the very act of existing of that being (for example, moral goodness is “only” an accident).

As we shall see when we begin to consider the various accidents in particular, “accident” is an analogous term. The in-

telligibility (ratio)¹⁰ of accident is that of a form, and even of a substantialized form. But this intelligibility "after the manner of a form" is not a mirror image of reality. The different accidents each realize this intelligibility differently. We shall see this more clearly as we go on, but it is necessary to be forewarned, lest a univocal notion of accident creep in.

89. Quantity and quality

To consider quantity in itself, what it is, what are its properties, and so on, belongs to the philosophy of nature. We are interested in quantity only to the extent that it is a principle of being. By quantity we mean here "continuous quantity" or extension. There is another kind of quantity, namely, discrete quantity. (Discrete quantity is number, whose consideration belongs entirely to the philosophy of nature.) Continuous quantity or extension is defined as "that which has parts outside of parts" (tin's is a definition of the *abstract* accident, quantity).

The first question that arises is that of the distinction between matter and quantity. There seem to be no unequivocal instances of a change in quantity while the matter remains constant; hence we are not able to use the argument for a real distinction based on a real change. Moreover, matter does not exist without quantity, and quantity is not naturally found as an existing being without matter. It seems that the only way to approach this question on a philosophical basis is that of a deduction from the principles of act and potency. If we go back to the original evidence from which we found that there is a distinct substantial principle called primary matter, we recall that primary matter is the common, determinable element or principle in substantial change. It is, therefore, pure potency in the order of essence. Now, what is the nature of quantity? It is in potency to division, but of itself it is actually "spread out," such that in relation to place one part is here and another there. Therefore, quantity is an act. Hence it cannot be really identical with matter but

¹⁰ On the meaning of "intelligibility," see above, sec. 74.

must be really distinct from matter. On the other hand, by its nature as extension, it presupposes some substance, for the parts which are outside of other parts must be parts of something; they cannot *just* be parts (although they can be abstractly understood in that way). Therefore, quantity is an accident. Quantity is in a subject, or "inheres in" a subject, and can be correctly described as an intrinsic modification of a substance. Moreover, quantity is to be found in all the tilings of our experience, and all these things are material; hence quantity has an intimate connection with matter.

In relation to other accidents of material things, quantity is the basic accident. It is obvious that quantity is presupposed for the accidents of time and place, *situs* and *habitus*. It is also presupposed for qualities like color (which is a modification of a surface), figure, hardness, softness, and the like, and for the actions and passions of material things, as we can see from a rapid glance at some of them (for example, chemical activities).

The qualities of material things are generally considered to belong to four classes: shape and figure (which are "qualities of quantity"), power (and the lack of it), habit and disposition, and passions (that is, the affections of tilings which are changed, such as hot or cold, as well as such modifications which are similar to dispositions but are completely temporary, as blushing). These various accidents are similar in that they all designate some way in which a real thing is over and above its substantial determination. All of them presuppose a subject; that is, there must be something which is shaped, has power, has acquired a habit, and so forth. Any of them can be appropriately pointed out in answer to the question, "What sort of thing is it?" (hence the name quality, derived from the Latin interrogative pronoun or adjective *qualis* which means "what sort of?"). Thirdly, all of these various accidents are similar in that (a) they modify a substance absolutely or in itself, that is, not in relation to some other things, and (b) they can be directly conceptualized and defined. Hence, qualities are "formal accidents,"

that is, the analogy between form and matter on the one side and quality and substance on the other is very close from the point of view of the ways in which they are understood, and, as we have seen, the way in which these principles are understood is an essential characteristic or property of a predicament.

90. Digression: the substance-accident distinction and the theology of the Eucharist

A Catholic has a particular interest in this doctrine, because it is very closely related to the theology of the Eucharist. Revelation tells us that the apparent bread and wine of this sacrament are the Body and Blood of Christ. Theologians say that the accidents of what was the bread and wine exist, by the power of God, without inhering in their natural subjects.

It is of course important to remember that the distinction between substance and accident was first stated by Aristotle, obviously in entire ignorance of the revelation to come. So it is a purely philosophical doctrine. Secondly, it is important to see that the distinction of substance and accident does not "explain," or make the sacrament "easy" for God. This much is true: if we were to assert the identity of substance and accident, the revelation would be unintelligible.

91. Definitions

Accident is that by which a being exists in some modified way, that whose nature is to be in another, as in a subject.

Quantity is that by which a material substance has parts outside of parts.

Quality is the accident which modifies the manner of existing of a being.

92. Readings

James S. Albertson, S.J., "The *Esse* of Accidents According to St. Thomas," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXX (1953), 265-278; a textual study showing that accidents do not have a natural proper existential act really distinct from the existential act of the rest of the being.

St. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 3, art. 6 (substance and accident in creatures and in God), q. 54, art. 3 (the distinction between substance and accident even in angels), q. 77, art. 1 (including the arguments and their answers; the distinction between the substance of the soul and its accidents); Pt. III, q. 75, art. 5 (on the accidents of the Eucharist); Pt. I-II, q. 53, art. 2, ad 3 (the difference between the concrete and abstract accident); *Truth*, q. 3, art. 7, ad 2 (concrete and abstract accidents); *On the Power of God*, q. 7, art. 7, par. 1 (substance and accident as beings).

Clifford G. Kossel, S.J., "Principles of St. Thomas's Distinction Between the *Esse* and the *Ratio* of Relation," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXIV (1947), 93-99; this section is a very fine explanation of accident considered as a predicament.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

42. *Proper Being, Predicamental Being, and Being Which Is Truth.*

Is is said in three ways. The first way is that in which it signifies the truth of a proposition and is a copula; and in this sense . . . "being" is an accidental predicate, and this "is" is not in the thing but in the mind which joins a predicate with its subject. . . . A second way is that in which we speak of the *esse* which pertains to the nature of the thing which is divided into the ten predicaments; and this *esse* is in the thing, and is the act of being resulting from the principles of the thing, as "lighting" is the act of "that which shines." Sometimes [in a third way] *esse* means essence, or that according to which a thing is.

*Commentary on the Third
Book of the Sentences*, dis.
6, q. 2, art. 2.

43. *Essence with Respect to Substance and Accident*

Simply and in the first sense, only substances are defined, and only substances have an essence. . . . But in a qualified sense, and secondarily, other things also can be defined. For substance, which absolutely has a quiddity, does not depend in its quiddity on another. But accident depends on a subject, although the subject is not of the essence of an accident, just as the creature depends on the creator, and yet the creator is not of the essence of the creature, so that it would be necessary to place an exterior essence in its definition. But accidents do not have *esse* except by this that they are in a subject, and thus their quiddity depends on a subject; and for this reason it is necessary that the subject be placed in the definition of the accident, sometimes indeed in the nominative, sometime in an oblique case.

The subject is used in the nominative case, when the accident is signified as an accident concretely with a subject, as when I say, "Snub is a concave nose." For then "nose" is placed in the definition of "snub" as if it were a genus, to indicate that the accidents do not have subsistence except from a subject. But when the accident is signified in the abstract, after the manner of a substance, then the subject is placed in the definition of the accident in an oblique case, like a difference, as it is said, "Snubness is the concavity of the nose."

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. VII, lect.
4 (ed. Cathala, Nos. 1352-
1353).*

44. *Difference Between the Way of Knowing
and the Way of Being*

A great mistake is made about forms, for the reason that many judge about them as they judge about substances. This seems to happen because in the abstract forms are signified after the manner of substances, as whiteness, virtue and so forth. Hence, some, following the manner of speaking, judge about them as if they were substances.

*On the Virtues in General,
art. 11.*

45. *Existential Act and Predicamental Being; the Relation
of Substance and Accident to Existential Act*

"Esse" taken in its second meaning is "the act of being inasmuch as it is a being," that is, by which something is denominated actually a being in the real order, and in this meaning, esse is attributed only to those things which are contained in the ten genera. Consequently, "being," which is denominated from this esse, is divided by the ten genera. But this esse is attributed to something in two ways. In one way, [it is attributed] as to something which properly and truly has esse, or is, and in this way it is attributed only to substance subsisting by itself. For this reason, that which truly is, is called substance in the first book of the *Physics*. But all those things which do not subsist by themselves, but are in another and with another, whether they are accidents or substantial forms or any parts whatsoever, do not have esse so that they themselves truly are, but esse is attributed to them. In the second way, [esse is attributed to something] as to that by which something is, as "whiteness" is said to be, not because it itself subsists in itself, but because by it something has "a being white."

Quodlibet IX, art. 3.

CHAPTER XIII

The Formalized Accidents

93. Relation

So far we have considered the predicaments of substance, quantity, and quality, which are similar in that they designate the subject in itself. The remaining predicaments, relation, action, passion, when, where, situs, and habitus, all refer to the subject but either directly or indirectly include a reference to something else. These predicaments will now be taken up in some detail.

The dictionary defines "relation" as the mode (or way) in which one or more tilings stand to another or others. In this definition, the word "things" is taken in a very wide sense to include not only real things, but anything conceived or understood after the manner of a thing. It can also be defined as the order or respect (as in the phrases, "in regard to," "in respect of") of one to another. In some cases, the whole reality of one thing is referred to another, such that the relation is really the same as that which is related. For example, the whole reality of potency lies in its order to act; so, too, matter is real inasmuch as it is the capacity of receiving form, essence is real inasmuch as it is wholly ordered to the act of existing, and so on. Such relations we call "transcendental relations"; we do not deal with them here, for they arc only the things themselves which are related, and we have considered them as constitutive copinciples of being.

The relations we are interested in now are those which are called "predicamental" relations. They arc first of all accidents; that is to say, they do not constitute the reality of the thing related but are something other than the substance of the thing

itself. For example, a "father" is not constituted a being by his relation to his child; a thing which is similar to another is not constituted a being by being similar, and so forth. The relations in these two examples are respectively "fatherhood" and "similarity."

In order that we can talk of a relation, there must be a subject (for example, the man who is the father), a term (the child), and the foundation, that by reason of which the subject is referred to the term (for example, in our case, the generation of the child by the father). If one of these three is missing, there is no relation (for example, between two things which are in no way comparable there is no relation because the foundation is missing, thus, "green," strictly speaking, is neither similar nor dissimilar to "cube root"—there is no foundation for a comparison).¹

We can easily see that in some cases the subject, term, and foundation are each real. In such a case we speak of a *real* relation. In many cases, however, one of the three is not real but is supplied by an act of the mind; for example, we can speak of the "left" side of this paper, although the paper has no left side, and there is nothing in the paper which gives it the foundation for such a comparison to a man. In a man, we speak of a left side, for there is a foundation in the bodily structure between right and left. In other cases the term is not real; for example, when we say "Elmer is as moody as Hamlet" or "as simple as Li'l Abner." In such cases, we speak of a "relation of reason," and this kind of relation is a being of reason. (One of the relations of reason which we can easily overlook is the relation of identity; identity is a relation of reason because there is no term distinct from the subject).

Hence, relation is unique among the predicaments. For all the other predicaments have to be real, whereas relation can be real or not-real, and still be a predicament.²

¹ On the function of the foundation in relation, see Selected Passages, No. 47.

² On this point, see Selected Passages, No. 48.

Our particular problem then is: What is 'relation' considered in itself? It is, of course, a predicate, and so something understood, an *intelligibility* (a *ratio*). But our question means more than tins; it means, Is a real relation as such and according to its mode of intelligibility to be found in the order of being? Why is this a problem? One easy way to see that this is a problem is to consider the fact that the relation of a particular subject can arise, change, and disappear without any efficient cause influencing that subject. For example, one white page of paper is *like* another, but if the other turns brown with age, the white page is *unlike* the brown one. The white page has changed from like to unlike without any cause influencing the white page. How can this be? Or again, there are thousands of eggs in existence, all of which are like each other. When a new egg is laid, all the other eggs are now similar to it. And how many relations of similarity does each egg have? It seems foolish to say that there are thousands of perfectly similar accidents in each egg, differing only in their term, and it is impossible to say that there is a general relation of similarity, because a general relation is abstract and cannot be found in the real order but only in a mind. These absurdities and impossibilities should be enough to show us that the question has been wrongly understood.

Let us go back briefly to accidents. The intelligibility'-, "accident," which is mentally understood after the manner of a form is variously and differently realized in existent material beings. In saying that accident is conceived after the manner of a form, we mean that it is thought of as a form or quasi form determining and modifying a substance, in a way somewhat like that in which substantial form determines and specifies matter. Since the intelligibilities which we thus conceive bear directly on real beings, they are first-intention intelligibles.‡ This does not mean, how-

‡ Recall that first intentions are knowledges of that which we know directly, that is, of things or objects. Second intentions are knowledges about objects *as known* and are called "second" because they presuppose a previous act of knowledge to be known; cf. above, sec. 82, n. 8.

another quantity, so as to be two inches long. Now it is the very nature of quantity that any one quantity' *can* serve as the measure of every other quantity. This nature of quantity is *formalized* and actualized as soon as a mind apprehends these beings, quantified as they are, as respectively "shorter than" and "longer than."

This does not make these relations beings of reason. For what is understood is completely real. In the real order, there are (1) two subjects, one for each of the relations: (2) two terms, one for each relation: (3) the foundation, which in itself is a real principle of the being and, at the same time, is such as to be "open" to other realities of the same order.⁴ The intellect recognizes them for what they are and understands the subject by reason of the foundation, as related to the term of the relation.

But the way in which these three principles of relations are understood is unlike the way in which they are in the real order. Relation is understood as a kind of form which is between two beings, and joins or unites them like a bridge or a rope.⁶ What is there in the real order which corresponds to this intelligibility conceived after the manner of a form? The answer is that there is one real subject (a being) with a real foundation (quantified, acting, or being acted on), and another real being. Corresponding to the conceived form there is a *situation* which includes several beings. Yet in a real relation *what* is understood is truly in the real order. In a relation of reason, on the other hand, the mind precisely *contributes part* of what is understood; that is, either the foundation or the term.⁰

In the relations based directly on quantity, and in those which

⁴ See Selected Passages, No. 47.

⁶ Of. Selected Passages, No. 49.

• It is traditional to speak of the "esse" and the "intelligibility" (*ratio*) of a relation. Real relations and relations of reason have the same intelligibility (that is, they are understood as involving a subject, foundation, and term). But only a real relation has "esse." This means, "Only of a real relation is it true that there is in the real order a subject, a foundation, and a term." (In the real order, relation is not a distinct form inhering in some subject; as understood, it is a formalization; evidently, a formalization cannot exercise an act of existing.)

are based on quality through quantity, we have what may be called a formal, static relation ("equal," "larger," "similar"). These relations are pure intelligibilities and do not imply any kind of unification of subject and term in the real order.

There are other relations which are not so purely formal and which imply some kind of union between subject and term. These are the relations based on passion and action. For example, let us take the relation of "child." A child is a human being who, being a substance (the subject), has been produced in its being by a parent (the term), so that at least for the beginning of its existing it depends on another (the foundation). To be produced by another is in some sense to be connected with another. Yet cause and effect are really distinct beings and do not by their very natures involve each other. An effect "includes" its cause, inasmuch as it is related to it; more precisely, inasmuch as it has received some influence from it. Yet it is a really distinct thing (according to its intrinsic principles of being). The child, considered in its intrinsic constituents, is a substance, with an act of existing proper to it and variously modified by its inherent perfections. But of this child it is also true that it is the child of these individual parents. When this situation is seen as a whole, immediately there is a relation. Again, the mind adds nothing to *what* is understood.

Let us take another example of the reception of some accidental perfection—let us say that the power of sight has been acted on by an external visible object. The subject is the person possessing the power; the term is the physical agent; the foundation is the reception of the influence from agent to patient. But note that a power is already ordered to the reception of such an influence prior to the action of the agent; in other words, passive powers are by their very nature finalized toward the corresponding agents. Consequently, there is a union—not substantial but accidental—through the tendencies of passive powers as well as through the reception of influences from agents.

The relation of a cause to its effect is not as simply handled

as that of an effect to its cause. For, as we have already seen briefly and shall see more fully in the next section, the causality of the causes which we find in immediate experience is really distinct from them and flows from active (or operative) powers which, as accidents, are really distinct from the substance of the causes. Hence, in finite causes we can find the three elements of a relation as real and as really distinct from each other. For example, in the relation of "father," as we find it among men, there are (1) the man who is the subject of the relation; (2) his active powers and his activity by which the effect is produced; (3) the really distinct effect, the child. However, if in some being its powers and its activity are really identical with its act of existing, then we could not find the three really distinct elements which constitute a real relation. In God, the relation of "Cause of the world" is a relation of reason, for we place distinctions between the intelligibilities of power and activity although there are really no such distinctions. For the same reason, all relations of God to the world are relations of reason,⁷ even though what we understand in them is true.

In the case of finite agents, relations based on causality are not merely formal, static ones. Like the passive powers, the active powers of created things are finalized toward their objects. Moreover, active powers are tendencies, and so subject and term are united—again accidentally—through the tendencies of active powers toward their corresponding passive potencies. As we have seen before, act-potency correlations are based on the very nature of act and potency and, consequently, are not immediately and directly predicamental relations. For example, the tendency of any acid to react chemically with a suitable base is the very nature of the active power of that acid. So, tendency and finality are not predicamental relations but are based on essential act-potency correlations.

Furthermore, action and passion may be transitory (for ex-

⁷ Except, of course, such relations as are involved in, or are a consequence of, the Incarnation.

ample, the generation of a living thing), but the relations based on them are permanent. How can this be? First of all, once it is true that A has caused B, it is always true, and so from the viewpoint of intelligibility the relation is permanent. But there is more to it than this. In all material tilings, the cause in acting loses something to its effect—not because it is a cause but because it is a material thing. For example, in local motion and in heating there is a loss of energy; in lighting, there is an emission of photons; in chemical activity there is a loss of energy (electromagnetism and gravity remain mysterious). In the generation of living things, there is a loss of some part of the material substance of the parent. Hence, a material thing is permanently different once it has caused an effect. And, for its part, an effect has its *esse* as received from its cause. This received *esse* remains permanently a received *esse* (and this is true of immaterial effects, like a created angel, as well as of material ones). Hence, there is no question of relations based on passion or action ceasing merely because the actions or passions have ceased. Moreover, there are the basic, transcendental orders of active powers toward passive and of passive powers toward active ones, and these transcendental orders which are essential to the powers remain as a permanent ontological substrate for predicamental relations.

Thus, when we understand a complex situation by means of the intelligible form of relation, what we understand is truly in the real order: subject, term, and foundation. But the static relations based directly on quantity and those based on quality through quantity only assert these elements and do not imply any union of any kind between subject and term. However, the relations based on action and passion, although they also express in a unified way a complex situation of several beings, imply over and above that an accidental union of subject and term through finality, tendency, and activity.

One of the important divisions of relations is that into mutual and nonmutual relations. By a mutual relation is meant one which

is the same from both sides of that which is related; examples of such are similarity, equality, and the like. Nonmutual relations are those which are different on the two sides of the things related, for example, parent and child, larger and smaller, and that whole large group of relations which are real on one side and of reason on the other; for example, a table is at my right hand (real), but I am on the left of the table (of reason), or, I know this thing (real), but this thing is known by me (of reason).

There are various foundations of relation. We have already considered quantity and action and passion. Aristotle adds a third (*Metaphysics*, Bk. IV, 1020b30-31), that of being measured, as knowledge is measured by its object or a portrait is judged by its faithfulness to the person. There are, of course, related substances, for example, substances which differ specifically; and related qualities, for example, similar or different qualities. But substance and quality do not constitute independent foundations for relation, except through quantity or action and passion.⁸

94. Action and passion

Motion or change is in that which is moved or changed and is clearly the act (perfection) of that which undergoes change. Motion or change is already in itself an intelligibility; we understand the total process from initial stage to term (at least relatively in such instances as local motion), although what is actually real at any moment of time is not the total process but only one stage of it.

It is one and the same motion which is from the mover or agent. Therefore, when we compare or contrast action and passion, we are still referring to one and the same motion, not

⁸ St. Thomas explains that substance and quality are absolute perfections; that is, they are the perfections of the subject itself. Substance and quality are related, either through quantity (so that we can speak of "one" or "many" qualities, the "intensity" of a quality, and so on), or through action and passion. See *In V Metaphys.*, led. 17; *In I Sent.*, dis. 26, q. 2, art. 2, ad 4; *In III Sent.*, dis. 5, q. 1, art. 1, qa. 1. See also, Selected Passages, No. 46.

two. Exactly the same thing is referred to in the real order when I say "A moves 8," and "B is moved by A," although in the first case action is predicated of A, and in the second passion is predicated of B. Hence, action and passion are identical in reality with the motion and with each other, but they are different intelligibilities: for to be the act or perfection of the changing in so far as that act is in the changing and to be the act of the changing in so far as the change is from the agent are different intelligibilities.⁹

Do not confuse this with situations which are expressed thus: "A moves B" and "B moves A," because here two actions are predicated of two different things. Likewise, "B is moved by A" and "A is moved by 8"; here two (numerically) different passions are predicated of two numerically different things. These are not identical in reality with each other.

To have the situation of action and passion in the real order, only three "things" are required: an agent with an active power, a thing in which change takes place, and the change itself caused by the active power. Nothing else is necessary; in particular, there is no need for an acquisition or change in the agent.

Although motion or change is properly in the patient, we actually predicate the action of the *agent*. In doing this, we directly understand and name one thing—the agent—from another which is really distinct from it. We say, "An electric coil heats the water," though the heating is going on in the water, not in the coil. (Of course, there are other things going on: the electric current is heating the coil, and there is also some action of the water upon the coil. But we are abstracting from these other actions, and treating only the one action.) We understand the coils influence upon the water in terms of something modifying the coil, and this modification itself we treat after the manner of a form. Hence, "action," strictly speaking, is a construct, and this kind of construct we call an *extrinsic denomination* (because the agent is named—*denominatur*—from the change it pro-

* Cf. Selected Passages, No. 50.

duces in the patient). Because action as a predicament is understood after the manner of a form, action is a univocal predicate.

"Passion" is predicated in a similar way, for "passion" is expressed in a predicate when we understand and name the patient from a change in it produced by the agent. For example, we say, "The house is being built by John." (Distinguish this predicate from the kind expressed in a sentence like "The house is being built"; in the latter sentence, not passion but motion or change is being predicated.) Hence, "passion," strictly also, is an extrinsic denomination (because the patient is partly named from a reference to the cause of the change). Because passion is understood after the manner of a form, it is a univocal predicate.

When we ask what is referred to in the real order, we designate the motion or change in the patient. But motion or change is a process-toward-the-act of being, and so is in the existential order; change is a way to come to be. Thus, change in itself, in the real order, is analogous. For example, one kind of change is alteration (change of quality), another is augmentation (increase in quantity), another is change of place, and so on. These various changes are different as changes, not by an external difference added to them.

Likewise, there is an act in the agent which grounds its reality as agent. This act in the agent is not its substantial form or its act of being or a quality but the act of an active power, which presupposes the act of existing. This act, concretely, is the "agent in act," or "the acting of the agent," and is itself not a univocal reality but an act which is analogous like the act of existing. "Acting" is known directly in a judgment, in a verb of acting (in a way similar to the act of existing), and we can have a concept of action, not directly by abstraction from the thing, for acting is by no means abstract; it is necessarily concrete and existential. We derive our concept of action by a "second-level" abstraction, from the judgmental knowledge previously expressed in a verb.

Note carefully that action and passion are correlated and that

consequently they refer only to transient action. That is why we sometimes call transient action "predicamental action." Immanent action or operation strictly so-called is an act or perfection of the agent; it is not of itself a means to anything else or a way to come to be but an end. We see or understand, and so forth, and these operations are the perfections of the seer, the knower. Immanent action is like transient action only inasmuch as it is an analogous kind of "acting," the actuality of a power of immanent operation.

95. When, where, situs, and habitus

The predicament *where* states the relation of one material thing to others in regard to quantity. Note that *where* is not the same as space. Space is a pure abstraction, namely, three-dimensional extension abstracted from all accidental modifications, understood after the manner of a being in itself as a kind of container into which material things are placed. *Where*, on the contrary, is concrete. It designates a material thing (more accurately still, a quantified thing) in relation to other material things. But because *where* names one thing from other really distinct things, it is an extrinsic denomination. Recall that extrinsic denominations are not beings of reason; for *what* I name when I say "here," namely, this thing and other material things and the contact (direct or mediate) between them, are completely real. But the *way* in which they are understood, that is, like an inherent form, is a way of understanding.

When names the duration (the continued existence) of a thing in relation to the duration of some other thing or things. Strictly speaking, the duration measured by *when* is a perfectly continuous duration, capable of indefinitely repeated division. Hence, the duration which is the measure by which I name something to be *now* must be a continuous change, and that is why local motion serves as a convenient measure. Distinguish *when* from time. Time is a pure abstraction, namely, perfectly continuous and even successive duration (changing duration) as the

measure ("number") of motion according to the sequence of priority and posteriority. *When*, however, is quite concrete; it names one real duration in relation to another.

Situs is a very complex predicament, adding to *where* the disposition or arrangement of different parts among themselves, for example, "head" or "foot" in an animal, "top" or "bottom" in a tree, and so forth. Note that the difference in the "different parts" is a difference of quality (figure and so on). Now, inasmuch as *situs* has this arrangement or structure or organization implied, to that extent it is an intrinsic perfection of the thing itself (some authors call this "internal situs," but more accurately it is a complex quality). But inasmuch as the proper notion of *situs* is a measure of the ordered parts in relation to place, it too, strictly speaking, is an extrinsic denomination.

Habitus, finally, designates place in relation to some human purpose, thus, clothed, shod, and so forth. Consequently, it is also an extrinsic denomination, naming one thing from its relation to another distinct thing.¹⁰

It will be noted that the predicaments which are extrinsic denominations cannot be applied to one individual in isolation. For example, if we supposed that only one material thing existed, it would have no predicamental relations, no predicamental actions or passions, would not be anywhere or at any time, would not have *situs* or *habitus*.

It is to be noted also that the last four predicaments (*when*, *where*, *situs*, and *habitus*) all depend on quantity in one way or another. Consequently, if there should be any nonquantified beings (spiritual beings), such beings will strictly speaking not be any *where*; nor will they exist during any portion of time; nor will they have *situs* or *habitus*. Of course, we cannot imagine such beings to ourselves, and we have to understand them by analogy with the sensible things of our experience. Hence, we will apply these predicaments to them, but we should understand that this is done improperly.

*Cf. Selected Passages, No. 51.

96. Definitions

Relation is the way in which one "thing" stands to another or others. For the expression "stands to" we may substitute "is in a certain respect to," "is with regard to."

Transcendental relation is a principle of being whose whole reality lies in its orientation to another. (For example, matter whose whole reality' lies in its orientation to form.)

Predicamental relation is the accident by which one thing (the subject) *is* contingently with respect to another (the term). (For example, fatherhood, similarity.)

Real relation is a relation in which the subject, foundation, and term are all three real. (For example, fatherhood is a real relation because the man who is the father, the person who is the child, and the act of generation are all three real; similarity is a real relation when the material quantified thing which is the subject exists, the term also really exists, and the foundation is a real modification of the subject.)

Relation of reason is a relation in which either the foundation or the term is produced by an act of the mind. (For example, the right side of a desk—the desk has two sides, the subject and the term, but no foundation in itself for having one side called "right." Or we may say that a certain person is "as inaccessible as Jupiter"—the person exists; no one can get to see him, but Jupiter is not a real being.)

Mutual relation is one of a set of relations which are such that the relation of subject to term is the same (specifically) as the converse relation. (For example, if *A* is similar to *B*, then *B* is similar to *A*; so, too, with equality.)

Nonmutual relation is one of a pair of relations which are not the same in each of the pair of terms involved. (For example, if *A* is larger than *B*, then *B* is smaller than *A*; if *A* is *B*'s father, *B* is *A*'s child; if I know a thing, the thing is known by me—and here the first is a real relation, the second a relation of reason.)

Action is the change (motion) of a patient as from an agent.

Passion is the change (motion) of a patient as received (from an agent) in a patient.

Extrinsic denomination is the understanding and naming of one thing from another thing really distinct from it.

When is the accident by which we name the duration of one thing from the continuous duration of another.

Where is the accident by which we name one thing from its contact with other material things distinct from it.

Situs is the accident by which we name the internal order of different parts of one thing in relation to where these parts are. (For example, top, bottom, middle.)

Habitus is the accident by which we name one thing as being in a certain situation in reference to a human purpose. (For example, clothed, shod.)

97. Proof

In our experience there are real things (subjects) which must be understood as related by reason of some intrinsic perfection in them.

But: when the intelligibility (*ratio*) of a relation expresses real and really distinct subjects, foundations, and terms, it possesses all the elements necessary for a real relation.

Therefore: there are real relations.

98. Readings

St. Thomas Aquinas, *On the Power of God*, q. 7, art. 9, ad 7 (distinction between the *esse* and the intelligibility of a relation), q. 7, art. 10, ad 8 (perfections which are not forms); *Summa Theologiae*, Pt. I, q. 28, art. 1 (meaning of real relation), q. 29, art. 4 (on relation, especially in God).

Clifford G. Kossel, S.J., "The *Esse* and *Ratio* of Relation," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXIV (1946), 19-24, 30-36, 96-107; "St. Thomas's Theory of the Causes of Relation," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXV (1948), 151-172.

Selected Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas

46. *The Foundations of Relation*

Since a real relation consists in a certain order of one thing to another, relations of this kind must be found in as many ways as it happens that one thing is ordered to another. But one thing is ordered to another, either according to its act of existence, inasmuch as the *esse* of one thing depends on another, and this is the third mode; or according to active and passive power, according as one thing receives something from another, or gives something to another, and this is the second way, or according as the quantity of one thing can be measured by that of another, and this is the first way.

But the quality of a thing, as such, regards only the subject in which it is. Hence, according to quality, one thing is not ordered to another, except in so far as quality has the nature of an active or passive power, inasmuch as it is the principle of action or passion; or because of quantity or something pertaining to quantity, as one thing is said to be whiter than another, or as something is said to be similar [to another], which has some one quality. But the other predicaments rather follow relation than cause relation. For "when" consists in some relation to time; "where," to place; "position," implies an order of parts; "habit" a relation of that which has to that which is had.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. V, lect. 17
(ed. Cathala, Nos. 1004-
1005).*

47. *The Foundation and the Reality of Relation*

Relation does not have an *esse* in the real order except from this that it has a foundation in the thing, and from this foundation it is found in a genus. Hence it is that the essential differences of relations are taken from the differences of other beings, as is clear from the Philosopher (*Metaphysics*, Bk. V), who says, that some relations are founded on quantity, and others on action, and so on. A further consequence is that the order of relations among themselves is according to the order of those things upon which they are founded. Therefore, as we find that in those things which are distinguished by their essences, that the principles of their substance distinguish them (namely, their matter and form), and other accidental things are signs which manifest this distinction, so is it also in those things that are distinguished by their relations, that the relations which are founded on the nature of the thing are distinguishing, and other relations are signs of distinction. But the relations which have a founda-

tion in the nature of the thing are the relations of origin, for fatherhood is founded in the communication of nature.

*Commentary on the First
Book of the Sentences, dis.
26, q. 2, art. 2, ad 4.*

48. *The Esse of Relation*

The intelligibility of a relation, like that of motion, depends on the end or term, but its esse depends on the subject.

*Summa Theologiae, Pt. III, q.
2, art. 7, ad 2.*

It is to be noted, that relation is said to be in another way than Other beings. For in other beings, any thing is said to be in two ways: with regard to its esse, and with regard to the intelligibility of its quiddity, as wisdom according to its esse places something in its subject, and similarly according to its intelligibility places a nature in the genus of quality. But relation is something according to the esse which it has in its subject, but according to its intelligibility it is not a "something," but only a being referred to another. Consequently according to its intelligibility it does not place anything in its subject, and this is why Boethius says that relatives do not predicate anything of that of which they are said. Hence also it is that there is something related in which there is only a relation of reason, and there is not placed in it anything in the real order, as when the knowable is referred to knowledge. And this is true as well in the relations which are predicated of God as in those which are in creatures, but in different ways, for the relation which has an esse in creatures, has another esse than the esse of its subject, and so it is something other than its subject. But in God there is nothing which has an esse different from it; for the esse of wisdom in God is the divine esse itself and not something superadded, and similarly the esse of Fatherhood. Consequently relation, as far as its esse is concerned—and this is the only way in which it ought to posit anything—is the divine essence, but according to its intelligibility, by which it has the function of distinguishing one person from another, to express *something* does not belong to it, but rather [to express] "to something."

*Commentary on the First
Book of the Sentences, dis.
20, q. 1, art. 1.*

49. *Is a Relation Related to Its Subject?*

. . . relations, by which a subject is referred to another, are not referred to the subject by another intermediate relation, nor to the

opposite; for example, fatherhood is not referred to either the father or to the son by means of a relation; and if such relations are spoken of, they are relations of reason.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. V, lect.
20 (ed. Cathala, No.
1063).*

50. *Action and Passion*

But if action and passion are the same in substance, it seems that they are not different predicaments. But it is to be noted that the predicaments are distinguished by the different ways of predicating. Hence, the same thing, according as it is predicated differently of different things, belongs to different predicaments. For place, inasmuch as it is predicated of the locating thing, belongs to the genus of quantity, but inasmuch as it is predicated denominatively of the thing located, constitutes the predicament "where." Similarly motion, according as it is predicated of the subject in which it is, constitutes the predicament of passion; but according as it is predicated of that from which it is, it constitutes the predicament of action.

*Commentary on Aristotle's
Metaphysics, Bk. XI, lect.
9 (ed. Cathala, No. 2313).*

51. *Not All Denominations Arise from Forms*

That from which something is denominated, need not always by its nature be a form. It is enough that it be signified after the manner of a form, grammatically speaking. For a man is denominated from action and from his clothes, and from other things like this and these really are not forms.

*On the Power of God, q. 7,
art. 10, ad 8.*

CHAPTER XIV

Correlations

99. Introductory note

A more accurate consideration of the nature of metaphysics can be made now that the basic fundamentals have been considered briefly. It is also now possible to draw together some elements which were first considered separately as they occurred, and this is especially true of the doctrine of analogy. Finally, more explicit comparisons can be made between metaphysics and other knowledges and between St. Thomas and some other philosophical positions.

This chapter is not intended to be taken in the ordinary class. As occasion offers, some references may be made to it; the better students can be directed to read parts of it and may even be inclined to read it on their own initiative. Because of this purpose, the treatment will be compressed and often schematic. It is by no means claimed to be exhaustive.

100. Ontological and constructural knowledge

We have briefly seen that knowledge can be divided and classified in many ways. We have seen that a knowledge is specified by its subject and, most accurately, by the formal intelligibility of that subject—what is known precisely in the way in which it becomes knowable to us. This formal intelligibility' (*ratio formalis objecti*) is often called the formal object.

Many writers on philosophy apparently think that the formal object is something entirely in the *thing* known, as it exists in the real order. It is therefore necessary' to state explicitly what

most Thomists (in fact, most philosophers) admit quite clearly—in other contexts and connections. First of all, a sensible, material thing is not *actually* intelligible¹ either in what makes it to be what-it-is or in what makes it to be simply, and therefore its actual intelligibility must include the way in which it becomes known to us. Secondly, immaterial, or spiritual, beings are indeed actually intelligible to an intellect proportioned to them; they are not directly intelligible to us but only by means of sensible things in one way or another; therefore the intelligibility of spiritual things for the human mind also includes the way in which they become intelligible to it. That is why St. Thomas speaks of the way of understanding (*modus et ratio cognoscendi*) as well as of what is known in the thing.² Since the knowable as such (*scibile in quantum scibile*) is what distinguishes and specifies a knowledge, we must take account both of what is known and of our way of knowing it.

One aspect of the “way of knowing a thing” has become clear only in recent centuries; it was not explicitly recognized even by St. Thomas. Among Thomists, Jacques Maritain was the first to give a detailed study of two different manners of knowing:

¹ By the use of this phrase, “actually intelligible,” implicit reference is made, first, to the common Aristotelian teaching that an intellect which knows by way of reception of an influence from material things cannot know them directly precisely as material (cf. G. P. Klubertanz, *Philosophy of Human Nature* [New York, Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1953], pp. 180-184); secondly, to the equally common teaching that the contingent precisely as contingent is not the object of purely intellectual knowledge (for the meaning of this teaching, see George P. Klubertanz, S.J., *The Discursive Power* [St. Louis, The Modern Schoolman, 1952], pp. 192, 216-219, 248-254, 284-286); for the need of finding some necessity in the scientific consideration of contingent things and the way in which this is done, see the forthcoming article of Joseph Owens, C.Ss.K., “A Note on the Intelligibility of Being,” *Gregorianum*, Vol. XXXVI (1955).

² For the *modus cognoscendi*—the way of understanding—note this list of references given by Schütz, *Thomaslexikon: Summa Theologiae*, Pt 11-11, q. 48, art. 1; Pt. III, q. 9, art. 4, ad 1; *In Boethii de Trinitate*, lect. 2, q. 1, art. 1, ad 3; q. 2, art. 1, ad 2, 3, 4; *In I Sent.*, prologue, q. 1, art 5, c. *In Post. Analyt.*, lect. 1, princip., lect. 4, princip.; lect. 30, princip.; *Truth*, q. 11, art. 1; *In II Metaphys.*, lect. 5, med.


"intuitive"⁸ (dianoetic) and "empiriological" (pcrinoetic)? We shall refer to the two kinds of knowing as "ontological" and "constructural."

An ontological knowledge is a knowledge that is directly and immediately of the thing known according to the latter's own proper reality. For example, we can immediately sense and understand the shapes of objects that have definite outlines, and in those shapes can directly understand some simple, direct relationships—for example, seeing an extended thing like the page of a book, we can immediately understand that this is a four-sided shape, and that a part of such a surface is always and necessarily less than the whole. Again, other simple qualities can similarly be apprehended by us—colors, temperature relative to our body, resistance of bodies. Moreover, in the presence of a sensible object, we immediately understand that it exists—at least under proper conditions of awareness.

*Particularly in his more recent writings, Jacques Maritain has been using the term *intuition*. Inasmuch as this term is meant to indicate the direct, nondiscursive character of the understanding, it translates *intellectus* or *intelligere*. But the implications and connotations of the term seem to be very unfortunate. What Maritain himself means by the term is not always clear. He speaks of an "intuition of being" which is had suddenly after long years of reflections; of an "intuition" of the existence of God. What is common to these two acts is their nondiscursive nature. It does not seem that either of them would have been called by St. Thomas an *intellectus*. For this reason, this book dissociates itself from the term "intuition" and uses instead terms like "insight," "*direct understanding*." What is meant by insight in this book has been explained several times; see also below, nn. 6 and 15.

⁴For this distinction, see Jacques Maritain, *Degrees of Knowledge*, trans. by Bernard Wall and Margot Adamson (New York, Scribner's, 1938), pp. 248-252; "On Human Knowledge," *Thought*, XXIV (1949), 225-243.

The correspondence between this distinction and F. S. C. Northrop's "concepts by intuition" and "concepts by postulation" is not so close, principally because of what Professor Northrop means by "intuition."

⁵To *understand* does not mean "to name," or necessarily, "to define"; it certainly need not mean "to have a scientific knowledge of." In particular, if we see an object shaped like , we can understand at once that it has such a shape, without being able to name or describe it, much less define it. This is by no means a mathematical, abstract knowledge; the experience is direct, immediate, and concrete.

Furthermore, ontological knowledge reaches to some minimal knowledge of natures: at least that this thing before me is a material thing, for example. To some extent, we have a direct ontological knowledge of what "man" is and of what "knowledge" is. Such direct knowledge is a knowledge of nature or essence, and it is very limited. We know the essence of man quite well; of living things generically; of most other things according to some remote genus (for example, as material substance). We also know that there are really distinct individuals and different kinds of things, whatever the differences between them may be.

Still further, we have an immediate knowledge of activity as a special kind of reality different from form, essence, and even the act of existing, although our first knowledge of these different kinds of reality will be very vague and inexpressible in words. Nevertheless, this knowledge is a direct knowledge of the thing known in its own terms. Together with this direct knowledge of activity we also have an immediate apprehension of change and causality (again, at least in some instances); we experience some things causing other things, for example, ourselves causing something to happen.

So far, we have instanced kinds of ontological knowledge in the mode of immediate experience. We can also have ontological knowledge of some conclusions which are no longer immediate, in the sense that their objects are not experienced in themselves. These conclusions can still be ontological in character, provided that all the terms entering into the reasoning process are directly ontological, that the reasoning itself is direct (that is, is either direct deduction, direct induction, or a direct fact-proof [*demon-*

* This is not knowledge at the level of the philosophy of nature, or even strictly, of principles proper to that branch of philosophy. This knowledge is much more a direct knowledge presupposed for all philosophy. That this is direct knowledge prior to philosophy is explicitly admitted by Father Kane, in William H. Kane, O.P., Benedict M. Ashley, O.P., John D. Corcoran, O.P., and Raymond J. Nogar, O.P., *Science in Synthesis* (River Forest, Dominican College, 1952), pp. 197-198.

stratio quia)), and that the reasoning proceeds according to the directly ontological character of the terms involved.

Hence, the method of ontological knowledge is (*a*) intelligible induction and direct insight;⁷ phenomenological description/ that is, direct, noninterpreted description; and (*b*) direct reasoning (as described above), that is, not hypothetico-deductive and not resting on extraneous elements.

Must there be *some* ontological knowledge? Yes, if there is to be *any* knowledge of reality at all. Otherwise, we would be in a complete subjectivism. This will become clearer if we take a look at constructura! knowledge and see how it is developed.

Let us first look at pure constructura! knowledge. Of course, there is no object of the human mind which is absolutely and entirely constructed by the mind without even any point of departure in experience. Mathematics offers the simplest and one of the best examples of a purely constructura! knowledge. Given the barest starting point in experience—we are not concerned here with establishing the fact, much less with the way in which mathematics is originally connected with experience—the mathematician proceeds to construct mentally his figures, formulas, functions, and symbols. In constructing the objects of his knowledge, he knows them, or, conversely, he knows them by constructing them. These “mathematicals,” as we may briefly call mathematical objects in general, do not exist; their being is a being-known; they are beings of reason. When someone formally

⁷These terms, especially the latter, are used in many senses. For the precise way in which they are used here, see Klubertanz, *Philosophy of Human Nature*, pp. 385-401; Robert J. Henle, S.J., *Method in Metaphysics* (Milwaukee, Marquette University Press, 1951). Note that the term “insight” is sometimes used by experimental psychologists as equivalent to “interpretation”; interpretation, however, seems to be a clear case of constructura! knowledge.

•See John Wild, *Return to Reason* (Chicago, Henry Regnery, 1953), pp. 35, 37-38, 48-49. Our acceptance of the term phenomenological does not imply that “phenomenology” as a distinct kind of philosophy is a part of Thomistic metaphysics, or even that it can be adapted or harmonized with it.

knows one of these "mathematicals," what he knows is precisely the mathematical and nothing else,⁹ that is, the object constructed by him. The only laws that a mathematical is subject to are the laws of intelligibility: definability or constructability, consistency, and the like. So much for pure constructural knowledge; let us now consider the constructural knowledge of the real.

Constructural knowledge of the real has several characteristics. It is first of all—at the level of scientific knowledge which is our main concern here—selective ("abstractive"). The scientist concentrates on some particular and, therefore, selected evidence, and what is selected is univocal, "literal." This is a general requirement; it is strongly reinforced if instruments are used which by their nature allow only for certain types or kinds of activity to register. Therefore, constructural knowledge is of a whole according to some partial aspect; and, under this first consideration, the "constructurality" consists in this: that the partiality of evidence and reporting is understood and stated as if it were a total report.

Secondly, constructural knowledge of the real arises by *rational induction*.¹⁰ We have already noted that ontological knowledge is severely limited in scope. In very many cases, we observe a fact, an event, and so forth, and all we understand is *that* this event occurs, once or several times; we see no connection that is directly intelligible. Hence, we are forced to a roundabout way of reasoning to come to anything like a general knowledge. We *argue* that we have hold of a necessity, on the ground of a relative consistency in an agent that is nonfree at least in this activity; we may also need statistics to achieve the generalization.

Thirdly, and most characteristically, constructural knowledge

⁹ Obviously we must distinguish mathematics as a science from such quite different operations as counting and measuring real things. This latter kind of knowledge is not constructural and seems to be prior, not posterior, to mathematics as a science.

¹⁰ For a fuller explanation of the term *rational induction*, see Klubertanz, *Philosophy of Human Nature*, pp. 385-401.

is indirect, that is, the knowledge of one thing in terms of another. This "other" is a construct or substitute-object. Now there are several types of constructs. An example of the first is in use when we understand the subatomic components of atoms in terms of "particles." Unless we had met a particle in direct experience, this word would be meaningless. Moreover, a subatomic particle is not a particle in the directly experienced sense of "particle." But the point is: if we conceive an atom as composed of particles, we can set up relationships between these particles that correspond with the selectively observed behavior of atoms. This kind of construction is construction in terms of a sensible model.

We can also make a construct in terms of nonsensible objects. Here, we begin with pure constructions, that is, with objects whose whole reality arises from their being built in such a way by the mind. Pure constructions are a special kind of knowledge all by themselves. But they can also be used instrumentally in the knowledge of the real, and when they are so employed a constructural knowledge of the real is obtained. Thus, mathematical physics is a constructural knowledge, in that it uses mathematical entities (as well as other types of construction) in the understanding of the real.

A third kind of construct is the operational definition. This is knowledge, not precisely *of* the thing but of what we must do to acquire "it" in the real order, whatever "it" may be. For example, "chlorine" is what you get at one of the poles in the electrolysis of salt water. This is a useful definition, and it has some connection with whatever "chlorine" is in itself, but the definition does not reveal that connection; such connection, if it is had, may be made by means of a model construction.

A fourth kind of construct consists in obtaining a surrogate of an essence or nature by the selection of what seems to be the most consistent of the various several attributes of a thing, which, at the same time, enables us to put some order into the rest of the attributes.

The third stage in construction—that of the four types of construction strictly so-called—is what is typically characteristic of constructural knowledge. It is by no means an arbitrary proceeding. At the very least, the construct must be verified—consequences deduced from the construct must be found to hold good in the real order. For example, the quantitative relations predicted by a mathematical formula in thermodynamics must be observed (verified) in the physical process. A closer type of relation is to be found in more physical theories which have some elements of description, or model, in them; here, the theory must not only provide good predictions but also must have some similarity with what is described, in so far as we know anything about it. For example, the atomic theory as a whole has many aspects which come closer to being descriptive than merely theoretical.¹¹

101. Metaphysics, experience, and spontaneous knowledge

In the first chapter, we have seen that descriptively metaphysics is a kind of knowledge that differs from other kinds. The question readily arises: "What is the relation between metaphysics and these other kinds of knowledge?" Because there are various modes of knowledge and many distinct kinds of scientific knowledge, we must consider them one at a time in their relation to metaphysics. The relations in question are principally those of priority and dependence.

Does metaphysics depend on other knowledge? In other words, does metaphysics have any presuppositions? In one sense, metaphysics cannot have any presuppositions. It is a demonstrative knowledge of all being, and so no being is beyond its scope. Moreover, there cannot be any other knowledge which is strictly and formally presupposed by the very nature of metaphysics

¹¹ In fact, the atomic theory even has some ontological elements within it; see George P. Klubertanz, S.J., "The Teaching of High School Chemistry," an article to appear in the *Journal of Chemical Education* (1955).

itself; Aristotle called it "first philosophy"; and we can say that whatever the scientific knowledge is which rests on no other knowledge, that is metaphysics.

In another sense, metaphysics cannot be the first knowledge. Aristotelian metaphysics—the first fully conscious attempt to build a metaphysics—was intended to be the last knowledge gained by a man. Formally, Aristotelian metaphysics rested on Aristotelian "physics." This historical fact has influenced other thinkers to say that metaphysics formally depends on other knowledge. Again, St. Thomas has explicitly said that metaphysics cannot be learned by a juvenile mind; a mature person is the only one who is capable of learning metaphysics. Usually some experience and at least a broad acquaintance with science are required before a student can successfully attack metaphysics. And, indeed, it would be totally impossible to begin the study of metaphysics without *any* preceding knowledge.¹²

The relation between metaphysics and spontaneous knowledge is further complicated by the fact that many statements (for example, that a real world exists, that there are real causes of sensible effects) seem to be found both in spontaneous knowledge and in metaphysics. And some knowledge of this kind necessarily exists in a person before he has had an opportunity to study metaphysics. What is the relation between the two knowledges? Or are they perhaps identical?

¹² The old adage says that whatever is in the intellect was *first* in sense—*prius in sensu*. Many Thomists (and others, too) seem to think that sensation and intellection are two distinct operations going on in us and somehow correlated; that sense precedes intellection in time; and that there is only a causal connection between the two operations. Introspection and analysis both show that as far back as a human being can recall, and clearly in adult life, human conscious activity is sensory-intellectual at once. There is no priority in time of sense over intellect to be discovered; only an analysis can discover the distinction between the two kinds of activity. Hence, to the objection, "Prior to metaphysics there is sense experience," the answer is, "Sense is indeed a *cause of* intellection, but sense experience is not an activity temporally prior to or descriptively distinct from intellection; perception is descriptively a single unified experience in which analysis discovers sensation and intellection."

We can begin to solve this problem if we reflect on the kind of evidence that metaphysics rests on.¹³ As we have seen, metaphysics rests on immediate or perceptual knowledge.¹⁴ We find in immediate experience the presence of sensible being, and sensible being is the starting point of all metaphysical knowledge. Note that we do not derive this principle (namely, being) *from* experience; we find it in experience. We do not say, "We found being in our spontaneous knowledge, let us now analyze that knowledge." True, we did find (sensible) being in spontaneous knowledge; then it was accepted unreflectively and without any relation to anything else. When we begin metaphysics, we begin with a very careful description of sensible being. This preliminary description is carried on with a constant reflection on the evidence, looking at what we find and trying to understand and express it to ourselves bit by bit in harmony with what we find, no more and no less. This is a highly self-conscious process, quite different from the procedure of spontaneous knowledge. Secondly, the metaphysician studies sensible being from the point of view of being as being, and this formal consideration gives quite a special character to metaphysical knowledge. From this description, the metaphysician continues on to an analysis of the structure of that being (the constitutive principles of being), still in the light of that same formal intelligibility. The analysis of the structure of sensible being as being leads to the discovery of the existence of the cause of that being, that is, to the existence of God. The rest of metaphysics consists in pushing further the implications of these basic discoveries (the properties of be-

¹³ For textual and historical studies on the nature of metaphysics as here expressed, see George P. Kluxrtanz, S.J., "The Teaching of Thomistic Metaphysics," *Gregorianum*, XXXV (1954), 3-17, 187-205, and "Being and God According to Contemporary Scholastics," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXXIII (1954), 1-16; Elizabeth G. Salmon, "What Is Being?" *Review of Metaphysics*, VII (1954), 613-631; Joseph Owens, C.Ss.R., "A Note on the Approach to Metaphysics," *The New Scholasticism*, XXVIII (1954), 454-476.

¹⁴ "By *perception* and *perceptual knowledge* we mean the total, unified activity whose object is an existing thing present to our senses and attended to by us; it is neither purely sensory nor purely intellectual.

ing, the transcendental; our predication of being, the categories, or predicaments; what is entailed by the nature of God as subsistent esse, the Divine attributes; and what can be elaborated concerning the relation of the world to God, creation, providence, the co-operation of God with creatures, the Divine foreknowledge, and so on).

Spontaneous knowledge, for its part, consists partly of immediate experience, partly of some relatively simple, nontechnical conclusions derived from experience. Therefore spontaneous knowledge contains in some way the starting point of metaphysics. But only "in *some* way"—not as the metaphysician uses it. Spontaneous knowledge has no reflexly conscious point of view; it takes immediate experience as it finds it, obscure and confused. Secondly, spontaneous everyday knowledge reaches to some understanding of sensible being, to principles understood in a rough, or gross, unrefined sense. Among these principles we find the principle of epistemological realism (understood rather vaguely and generally), the principle of the plurality of distinct individuals in the world, the principle of the diversity of the kinds of being ("kinds" or "species" understood in a very vague way), the principle of change, of the diversity of the kinds of change, and of causality within change.¹⁵ Thirdly, spontaneous knowledge includes some conclusions, such as the immortality of the soul and the existence of God (both of these understood not only vaguely but also through metaphor).¹⁰ This part of spontaneous

**Cf. n. 5. The listing of principles here is not exhaustive. We should also include such items as the knowledge of obligation and of the difference between right and wrong, the notions of right and duty, of truth and falsity.

¹⁴ In principle, there is no error in this kind of knowledge, for it rests on immediate evidence that is presented to the mind without the need of any investigation. It is not a careless or haphazard knowledge, even though it is not gained by a conscious methodology; for in this kind of knowledge overwhelming or massive evidence takes the place of methodological attention. Therefore, this knowledge is valid, that is, is true and certain; it needs no later justification or validation; consequently, also, philosophy need not begin with a universal doubt (and cannot so begin). But in fact spontaneous knowledge also includes much opinion, error, and sheer fantasy.

knowledge is both true and certain, although the certitude corresponds to the kind of knowledge we have and is only analogous to scientific certitude.

The relation of metaphysics to spontaneous knowledge therefore is somewhat complex. As far as the starting point of metaphysics is concerned, it is contained within spontaneous knowledge *materially* (it is not understood under the same intelligibility); it is not simply accepted *from* experience but is re-examined within experience with great care and in the light of being as being. As far as the principles are concerned, in the first place, the principles of metaphysics and of spontaneous knowledge are only *materially identical*. (Two propositions are materially identical when they have the same subjects and predicates—the same, that is, when they are considered apart from any added meaning they might have from their connection with a particular formal object of a habit, with particular principles, and with preceding reasoning on which they depend. St. Thomas calls a proposition isolated in this way a “position.”) In the second place, metaphysics does not accept its principles uncritically *from* experience. There is, it is true, a special difficulty with metaphysical principles. The understanding of being which is expressed in the principles mentioned above is difficult to bring to awareness because of its great generality'. They are implicit in *all* experience, it is true, but, because they pertain to all experience, attention cannot be focused on them by isolating them. Therefore the ordinary techniques of discovery are unavailing. These principles come to explicit awareness only by the sheer “massiveness” of their evidence, and this ordinarily takes quite a few years of experience and a sufficient maturity of the physical organism to permit some more than momentary' reflection. Metaphysics thus presupposes a confused and general knowledge of its principles. But these principles are not blindly accepted by the metaphysician; the student of metaphysics carefully re-examines the derivation of these principles from sensible being directly in some experience of being, and in so doing brings to explicit knowledge

their own intrinsic evidence (or "self-evidence"). This process we have called "intellective induction."¹⁷ Thirdly, spontaneous knowledge includes some conclusions which are materially identical (as positions) with some conclusions of metaphysics, and chief among these is the existence of God. Again, metaphysics does not merely accept this conclusion. Neither does it reject or doubt it. But unless a person already has some knowledge of God in some way and firmly accepts His existence, it is ordinarily impossible to deal intelligently with the proof of His existence.¹⁸ The human mind ordinarily cannot come to a knowledge of God in a single act—at least not to such a knowledge as would enable it seriously to inquire into the grounds of such knowledge or to investigate the Divine nature. Briefly, we can say that metaphysics neither accepts nor rejects the conclusions of everyday knowledge but critically examines the reasoning (which everyday knowledge did not do and could not have done) and very carefully determines the sense of the conclusion in the light of being as being.

102. Digression on "common sense"

Those who are familiar with other discussions of the problem raised in the preceding section will have noted the absence of the term "common sense." Sometimes, it is true, the term "common sense" means precisely what we have designated "spontaneous knowledge." In that case, the question, "What is the relation between metaphysics and common sense?" will already have been answered in our own terms of spontaneous knowledge. But this

¹⁷ By an "intellective (intelligible) induction" we mean an intellectual understanding that is gained in experience by an insight, direct, nondiscursive understanding of a concrete, sensible instance present to us. See the references given in n. 7; see also Edmund H. Ziegelmeier, S.J., "The Discovery of First Principles According to Aristotle," *The Modern Schoolman*, XXII (1945), 132-138.

¹⁸ "That is why an atheist, a skeptic, or an emotionally disturbed person is not convinced by any proof of the existence of God. To doubt a proof because atheists reject it is to confuse rational necessity with subjective conviction. See also below, sec. 105.

very' special meaning of "common sense" has been avoided in this book for two reasons: one drawn from ordinary usage, the other from historical considerations. In our ordinary usage of the terms, *sense*, *good sense*, and *common sense*, we imply practical knowledge.¹⁰ But metaphysics (and all philosophy except ethics) is not practical but theoretical, speculative, or pure knowledge. So, in answer to the question, "What is the relation between metaphysics and common sense?" we can say, "There is no direct relation." Common sense bases its practical judgments on experience and some simple inferences. Metaphysics is a speculative, scientific discipline concerned with the real as real. Indirectly, there is this relation: metaphysics is the elaborated, demonstrative knowledge of much of what is presupposed for common-sense judgments.

The historical meaning of *common sense* is complex. In one of the periodic reactions against a philosophy that had departed very far indeed from the common understanding of men and was even questioning whether either the philosopher himself or the world he claimed to know could significantly be said to exist, the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century realists came up with a new solution. Granting that reason could not know its own existence, the existence of a sensible world, and the like, these philosophers found a way out: they said that man possessed a faculty called "common sense" whose object was precisely these and similar truths. The solution was attractive; it would guarantee what, in fact, we all (somehow) know to be true; it was even tempting, because it would free us forever from the necessity of having to study and consider all other philosophies. Of course, in the sense of a distinct faculty, "common sense" could not be accepted by Thomists; so they identified "common sense" as "intellect working

^{**} According to *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 2d ed. (Boston, G. & C. Merriam, 1953), "common sense" has as its second meaning "Good, sound, ordinary sense; specif., good judgment or prudence in estimating or managing affairs, esp. . . . as not dependent on special or technical knowledge" ("3. Phil. *b.* The unreflective opinions of ordinary men").

on obvious and necessary truths." But the historical specter of the Scottish realism followed the term about in spite of the attempted correction.

Moreover, the Thomists have compounded the problem of "common sense" on their own. Many of them were looking for a "starting point" for philosophy, and they wanted a ready-made one, a critically justified one, and one against which other philosophical positions could be compared and accepted or rejected as the case might be. The most widely accepted solution was that the human mind spontaneously and immediately knew three fundamental truths (the first principle—of contradiction; the first fact—"I exist"; the first condition—the ability of the mind to know truth).²⁰ On the face of it, the intent of these philosophers looks perfectly sound; its real value lies in this: that they correctly realized the need for some starting point. For, if a philosophy must begin by justifying its very existence, then it never begins; the demand for total self-justification of a philosophy as its first step toward being is the demand of a skeptic. Basing philosophy on "common sense" eliminates an infinite regress in the search for a foundation, but it brings about new problems. Some of the utterances of "infallible common sense" are uncouth, and some are obviously wrong, so philosophy shall have to choose among them. But on what basis? On the basis of common sense itself? Those who chose to take common sense as their starting point²¹ had to answer the objection that they were dogmatic, likely to be fixed forever in error, at variance with the ancient tradition that philosophy is an *inquiry* into *every* object, not merely an inquiry about some objects. Moreover, science had made its

²⁰ "On this whole question of Thomistic epistemologies, see Georges van Riet, *L'Epistémologie thomiste* (Louvain, Institut Supérieure de Philosophie, 1946).

²¹ For one of the few good treatments of "common sense," see Yves Simon, *Traité du libre arbitre* (Liège, Sciences et Lettres, 1951), pp. 59-69. Unfortunately, the wrong connotations and historical associations of "common sense" cannot be avoided even by one who treats the real problem intelligently and well.

progress precisely inasmuch as it got rid of common-sense notions, and this was especially true of astronomy. Was philosophy to lose entirely its scientific character?

Tins approach did not please other Thomists.²² They were struck with the obvious inability of common sense to make the critical judgments it was alleged to be making all the time. They saw that if common sense needs to be corrected, it cannot be the starting point and the criterion of truth. So they wanted to begin by *rejecting* common sense, as the only alternative to accepting it. But if one rejects common sense, one must find some area that is outside common sense, and only two such starting points seem to be available. One is the conclusions of science, and this starting point has always been, and is now, the starting point of positivists, and remains that. In a later section, we shall consider the relation between metaphysics and science which is abstract and constructural. So we need not delay long here to explain why science is not a starting point of metaphysics. The other starting point outside the area of common sense is the basic concept of metaphysics, the concept of being, of reality, of intelligibility, or whatever a particular kind of philosophy has taken as its basic concept. This starting point has always been that of rationalists and of idealists; it cannot be the starting point of realistic metaphysics; at best, such realism would have to be mediate, and at this late date it scarcely seems necessary to show that mediate realism cannot stand up. From this historical consideration the conclusion seems to emerge that both the acceptance and the rejection of common sense make a realistic metaphysics impossible. Hence, it seems much better to avoid the term entirely.

Closely related to the discussion of "common sense" is the attempt to clarify the starting point of philosophy in terms of "common experience."²³ The sciences, by way of contrast, are said to

"On this point, see Louis-M. Régis, O.P., "La critique thomiste est-elle thomiste?" *Etudes et recherches, Philosophie II* (Ottawa, Collège Dominicain, 1938).

** This term was popularized by Mortimer J. Adler; see his *What Man Has Made of Man* (New York, Longmans, 1937), p. 139.

originate in "special experience." The choice of terms has unfortunate connotations. First of all, there is somewhat of a subjectivist flavor in the term, particularly since "experience" seems to be some sort of primitive and absolute reality when we do not stress the fact that experience is the immediate knowledge of *being*. Secondly, the use of "common and special" as alternative designations seems to suggest that whereas science is based on methodological, careful, critical, highly accurate, and selective data, philosophy is based on opposite grounds, that is, on haphazard, careless, inaccurate, unrefined data. This is how the distinction has been understood by many, and so they have concluded that philosophy might perhaps have some value as a preliminary stage prior to science but that it should yield to the more careful results of the sciences. So the term "common experience" also seems misleading and inappropriate.

103. Metaphysics and humanistic knowledge
(liberal education)

In examining, in the first chapter, human knowledge as it in fact presents itself, we discovered that it exists in three modes: that of spontaneous knowledge, that of humanistic knowledge, and that of scientific or demonstrative knowledge. We want here to consider the relation between the humanistic mode of knowledge and metaphysics; for this purpose we can briefly summarize the characteristics of humanistic knowledge. It is characterized by its effort toward the integration of knowledge through principles and through its appeal to the human being as a whole—as a sensory as well as a rational being, as a being with sensory emotions and rational tendencies as well as one with knowledge. As such, humanism is a distinct mode of human perfection, which cannot be omitted without harm to the development of the personality and cannot be substituted for or replaced by any other kind of perfection, without loss. Because it is a development of the total personality, humanism has an intrinsic value, and is by no means merely an instrument for other values. In fact, for many

persons, humanistic perfection is terminal as far as the natural development and training is concerned.

In the liberal subjects, especially in literature and history, we find many things which are materially similar and sometimes even materially identical with the principles and conclusions of philosophy. For example, we might consider the humanistic presentation of the dignity of man; similarly, the drama of human freedom, the dilemma of choice, the difference between right and wrong are found in a marvelously rich fashion in the humanistic mode of knowledge.²⁴ Are these characteristic understandings different from philosophy? If we put the question concretely, we can see that they are. Can the understanding of man presented in *Macbeth* be successfully put into the scientific mode of philosophy or psychology? Can Newman's *The Second Spring*, be adequately expressed in a graph, or the *Sonnets* of Elizabeth Browning be reduced to a series of experiments? Obviously they cannot; and, since this is so, the humanistic mode of knowledge must be admitted to be different from any scientific mode.

What is the relation of such humanistic understandings to the similar philosophical understandings? Both types of understandings rest immediately on experience and, therefore, not on each other. In this sense, the two are mutually independent. The principles of humanistic knowledge are essentially the same as the principles of spontaneous knowledge, but refined by some reflection and experience; they are concretely conceived and stated in a highly concrete and vivid way. In addition, where the principles as spontaneously conceived are vague or indistinct, in humanistic knowledge they are amplified and made definite through metaphor and imagery. What is more, in spontaneous knowledge the principles are present but scarcely function at all *as principles*; spontaneous knowledge remains fragmentary, disconnected. In humanism, the principles already present in spontaneous

* Much of both the Old and the New Testaments will be found to be in the humanistic mode. For example, consider the discourse of Jesus at the Last Supper as given to us in St. John's Gospel and see if this can be adequately expressed in technical, scientific terminology.

knowledge but unused are put to work to organize and unify. Inasmuch as humanistic knowledge is involved with what is concrete and sensory-imaginative, it will present through direct principles, metaphor, and imagery what philosophy considers on a purely cognitional-rational basis. But because humanistic knowledge is so highly concrete and so charged with emotion, it is incapable of clarification and of defending itself against certain kinds of attacks especially from technocrats, and error can easily be mixed in with its truth.²⁵ In this sense humanism needs metaphysics, not precisely as a necessary intrinsic constituent but as an external norm possessed by at least some who also have the humanistic perfection.

On the other hand, though humanism is not by its nature a step on the way to metaphysics, a liberal education is in fact a good preparation for the study of philosophy.²⁶ For the personal experience of every man is very limited, and in many cases, if one could call only on that purely personal experience, it is doubtful if even a whole lifetime could provide him with all the experience necessary for an adequate understanding of philosophy. It is well known that in the absence of experience, a merely verbal and abstract presentation will never provide an insight into reality. But the humanistic presentation is far more than merely verbal and it is concrete; it can provide an imaginative reliving of another's experience, and this contribution is notably great with respect to the philosophy of human nature and to ethics. By providing such a great enlargement of experience,²⁷ a liberal educa

• Note that an understanding which is essentially metaphorical can *never* be used as a premise in a philosophical argument and cannot simply be *turned into* a philosophical statement.

• The method of discovering a philosophy by investigating the "Western tradition" or canvassing the "great books" is essentially fallacious as a philosophical procedure: (a) it confuses humanistic and philosophical modes of knowledge; (b) it supposes there is a "least common denominator"—the "*philosophia perennis*"—which can be discovered by a poll of philosophers.

"An enlargement which, incidentally, was scarcely known to St. Thomas himself.

tion can make a successful study of philosophy possible much sooner than private experience could possibly do.

104. Metaphysics and other scientific knowledges

There are many contemporary philosophers who are of the opinion that philosophy is built on the conclusions of some science or of all the sciences or on the specialized, *interpreted* evidence of the sciences. Still others think that metaphysics at least is built upon the conclusions of the philosophy of nature.

Can metaphysics be built on the conclusions of any or of all the sciences? All the sciences are abstract; and all modern sciences are at least partly constructural. Any knowledge built upon abstract and constructural conclusions must necessarily itself be abstract and constructural. But metaphysics is not an abstract science, as we have seen abundantly; and it is an ontological knowledge, a knowledge of the real as it is. Hence, it is simply impossible for metaphysics to be built upon the conclusions of any or all sciences. Furthermore, the specialized and *interpreted* evidence of the special sciences cannot serve to ground either philosophy in general or metaphysics in particular. True, the evidence metaphysics seeks can be found in almost any experience inasmuch as it is a direct experience. But, as scientists are becoming more fully aware, the scientific "fact" is not simply experienced; it is a theoretically *interpreted* statement of something experienced. But the theoretical interpretation of any science involves both abstraction and construction and, consequently, is thereby not suitable as a point of departure for philosophy. Thirdly, metaphysics cannot be built upon the conclusions of the philosophy of nature.²⁸ First of all, even the philosophy of nature is abstract. In particular, it presupposes without discussing the reality of its object.⁻⁹ It knows, accepts, but never mentions exist-

²⁸ Cf. Owens, "A Note on the Approach to Metaphysics," *The New Scholasticism*, XXVIII (1954), 454-476.

⁻⁹ It is an axiom commonly admitted by all Aristotelians that "no science proves the existence of its object—except somehow, metaphysics."

ence. The being which is the object of the philosophy of nature is predicamental being. For that reason, it can never serve to ground the study of the real as real, of that-which-is.so Secondly, the object of the philosophy of nature (as ordinarily understood) is intrinsically connected with change;³¹ metaphysics at its crowning point reaches a being which is immune from change, and so its knowledge cannot successfully be based on the philosophy of nature.

Moreover, it is unnecessary to look for a foundation for metaphysics in any of the specialized sciences. Why seek such a foundation? Most of those who do so, give as a reason that they must keep metaphysics in touch with reality, as if the only alternative were to begin with sheer unattached ideas of nothing in particular. But, in fact, metaphysics is grounded in the immediate experience of sensible being; it is based directly on reality. It already has a better foundation of its very nature than could be given it by any abstract science.

Quite a contrary point of view is taken by those who assert that all the special sciences are based on metaphysics. On the ground that metaphysics alone can formally treat of the most universal principles of knowledge, they maintain that all the sciences which use those principles are thereby based on metaphysics. This, however, is an overstatement. It is true that only metaphysics can discuss certain universal principles correctly. But that does not make the other sciences formally depend on metaphysics. Any particular science starts with a certain number of assumptions, and, as far as the internal necessities of that science are concerned, these assumptions can remain unproved assumptions. As long as a thinker works within that particular science, he need never go back beyond those assumptions. True enough, if the thinker wants to find the foundation of his science outside that science and continues his search far enough, he will ultimately

³¹Cf. Owens, *loc. cit.*

"Nature" according to the Aristotelians is "the first principle of motion and rest"; therefore, it is material, changeable, and composite.

come to metaphysics. But this search is precisely no longer within his science.³²

We have thus seen that there is no direct dependence of metaphysics upon any other scientific knowledge.³³ Is there any dependence at all? Can metaphysics be helped by other organized knowledges? To some extent, yes. Mainly, it is a matter of avoiding error. Avicenna in the ninth century tried to prove that there could be only ten intelligences because he thought that there were in fact only nine spheres. When astronomy showed that the spheres did not exist, later philosophers were no longer tempted to prove how many intelligences there are. Similarly, the problem of the *primum mobile* simply vanished. The positive help given by science to philosophy is almost nonexistent for metaphysics, but it is somewhat more important for ethics, and even more for the philosophy of nature.

105. Metaphysics and the faith

Does revelation need metaphysics? Does the act of faith in a revelation need metaphysics? Absolutely speaking, no. Revelation can be accepted and understood on the basis of spontaneous knowledge alone. The truths necessary for faith, such as the existence of God, can be known with certitude by spontaneous knowledge, as we have seen. A Faith can be held and carried out in practice, even to a very high degree of perfection, without any philosophy (or theology)³⁴ whatsoever. There may be accidental

•This is not meant to deny that there is an order among scientific knowledges. There is such an order, or “hierarchy”; but this order is not such that we can deduce one science from another, substitute one for another, or tell from one science what another must say in detail. On the other hand, the more universal and abstract knowledges are prior to the lesser in logical sequence; sometimes the logically posterior sciences borrow principles from the prior in the form of axioms or postulates (assumptions); prior sciences can resolve conflicts among posterior ones.

“In the philosophy of nature, we investigate the nature of knowledge, and this investigation is of great help to metaphysics when the latter studies the nature of God.

** Unless the term *theology* is used in a purely etymological sense to mean “any kind of knowledge about God.”

and extrinsic reasons why some individual may need to learn metaphysics in order to save his soul, just as there may be a reason why some one needs to learn biology or astronomy. But such necessities are entirely extrinsic to the nature of revelation and of faith.

Does a Christian culture need metaphysics? Historically speaking, it would seem necessary that such a culture (*not* any given individual, as was just said) somewhere actively possess a metaphysics. In general, it seems to be a characteristic of the human mind to want to push into every possible area that can be known. If some major area of knowledge is left without its proper corresponding scientific knowledge, some other kind of knowledge will tend to take it over, with unfortunate consequences. This necessity is not because of the faith but because of the natural tendencies of the human mind. Similarly, if a culture fails to meet one of its problems because of some defect, that culture will suffer the consequences. If a Christian culture lacks medical knowledge, it may be destroyed by a plague and, ordinarily, will not be saved by a miracle. So, too, if a Christian culture lacks metaphysics, it may be upset by some problem of order—frequently an intellectual one—and, ordinarily, this consequence will not be prevented by a miracle.

Does theology need metaphysics? Here a distinction must be made. If we reserve the term *theology* for some kind of organized knowledge, theology will be seen to be of two kinds: positive or humanistic theology and scientific theology. Humanistic theology of itself does not need metaphysics, although there may be indirect necessities because of the culture or because humanism in general needs metaphysics as an external help, as we saw above. Scientific theology is the scientific (demonstrative) understanding of a revelation, and such an understanding becomes scientific through the application of rational, scientific understandings and methods³³ to revealed truth. Hence, scientific theology strictly

^{**} Naturally acquired knowledge seems to enter into theology in several different ways. (1) Some knowledge is preliminary or preparatory: arche-

needs metaphysics for its very existence as scientific knowledge?⁶

On the other hand, does metaphysics need the faith? If we are speaking of the rational necessities of an organized knowledge, no. Metaphysics is a natural knowledge; it is constituted by principles discovered in experience and is elaborated by natural reasoning. Historically speaking, metaphysics has been helped considerably by the faith, and it can be seriously contended that Thomistic metaphysics would not have taken the form it did without the faith. Nevertheless, Thomistic metaphysics remains a rational discipline, subject to strictly rational laws and necessities.

Finally, does the thinker who wishes to penetrate deeply and truly into the nature of being need the faith? Here the answer is almost an unqualified yes. Certainly it seems impossible for a young person to make much out of metaphysics unless he has a rather firm grounding in the Christian tradition and firmly believes in the existence of a distinct, personal God. Absolutely speaking, it might be possible for a virtuous and religious person, who does not accept the Judaeo-Christian revelation through no fault of his own, to come to something like a Thomistic metaphysics after years of experience and reflection. But such a limiting case serves, it seems, only to bring out the fact that meta-

ology, linguistics, knowledge of the pertinent languages, and so forth. (2) Other knowledge supplies factual premises for arguments; for example, biology may tell us that a certain material substance is a deadly poison, so the theologian concludes that to administer such a substance is murder. (3) Some knowledge enters into theology as materially constitutive; thus, philosophy enters in as determinable to the goal of the theologian and supplies him with both organizational principles and means of at least a partial understanding.

* It is a pedagogical question whether metaphysics should be learned first, and then the theology, or whether the entire understanding of reality could be taught together as "Christian Wisdom." The latter way seems more ideally perfect; the former is practically advantageous both in regard to the time needed and in view of the fact that students have to be prepared to live in an unbelieving world and so must be able to answer objections with naturally valid answers and to give natural arguments. Each method also has its disadvantages; the total approach is easily turned into a nominalistic process where the "philosophy" appears at best as mere opinion and often as mere words; in taking metaphysics (and philosophy, generally) first, there is some danger of rationalism.

physics as a discipline is not based on the faith. Basically, the reason why the thinker who understands Thomistic metaphysics and, much more, the thinker who brings about advances in metaphysics ordinarily must also be a Christian is the unity of personality. One cannot at the same time deliberately attend to the conclusion that God exists and rationally will to reject Him.

106. Thomism and other philosophies

We have already indicated in various sections of this book—and presumably the fact is sufficiently well known—that there are many philosophies, which approach reality in quite different ways and, at certain points, differ irreconcilably. This is the so-called "problem of diversity." What can briefly be said about it?

One approach to philosophy is to choose a reasonably good guide, on the basis of authority and tradition, and begin the study of philosophy. As we get into a philosophy, we will find our guide offering evidence for what he says, and we have the right and the duty to consider (a) whether there actually is such evidence; (b) whether significant contrary evidence has been sufficiently considered; (c) whether the evidence really supports the conclusion, leads to such an insight, and so on. If it does, we can accept it unconditionally. If we cannot precisely conclude that these three conditions are fulfilled but also cannot see that they are not fulfilled, it is prudent to accept the doctrine conditionally, that is, until we see that it is otherwise. Once we have worked through a relatively complete philosophy, we can go ahead to a deeper study which will also put us into contact with other philosophies. This further study is almost entirely a matter of acquainting ourselves with the history of philosophy in a very thorough fashion—not merely by way of memorizing dates and doctrines but with a solid grasp of the problems, methods, and presuppositions each philosopher has. On this basis we will be able to make a final decision about the philosophy we hold. This is a difficult program, and it is ordinarily possible only for those who intend to specialize in philosophy. Those who cannot com-

plete such a program will find no adequate *philosophical* solution to their problem.⁸⁷

Another approach to the problem of diversity of philosophies is through the history of philosophy. One could begin with the earliest recorded philosophies and follow the history of philosophy to the present day and, on the basis of what he finds, make up his mind. This is a relatively impractical way to go about solving the problem; it would entail a lifetime of study before one knew where he stood in metaphysics.

A popular contemporary approach is to take and accept the diversity of philosophical positions in connection with each philosophical problem. This way of solving or rather *meeting* the problem of diversity is indeed often used, but it is not very philosophical. For a philosophical position cannot be philosophically understood apart from the evidence, the principles, and the reasoning leading to it. Yet the system of seeing what all the important philosophers have to say on each point, as that system is ordinarily carried out, is merely a recounting of the positions, with a lot of rhetoric thrown in favor of the one the teacher happens to be (surreptitiously) advocating. The result of such an eclecticism is not philosophical thinking at all; it might perhaps lead to what Plato would call "right opinion," and again it might not.

107. The constructural knowledge of being

Can there be a constructural philosophy? There have been such philosophies; there still are. By a constructural philosophy we

K There are perfectly *reasonable* nonphilosophical grounds for solving the problem. For a Christian, there are relatively few difficulties in solving the problem on the basis of the harmony between his faith and the philosophy he accepts. For a Catholic, there remains only the problem of choosing between the various "Scholastic" philosophies. In principle, this problem is solved *philosophically* just like the more general problem of diversity. If he cannot solve his problem philosophically himself, it should be pointed out that he is really concerned only with philosophical *positions*, and the positions are sufficiently common that the problem is not of major importance for him.

mean one whose basic principles and concepts are constructural, although in most cases they also contain some ontological knowledge (which may result in an internal tension in the philosophy itself). To take a simple case, we need but consider the "being" of Parmenides. This immobile, simple, all-inclusive form is not a reality; to some extent it does help us to understand reality indirectly. But since being as being is directly (ontologically) intelligible to some extent, a constructural philosophy is unnecessary and to some extent useless. On the other hand, an ontological knowledge of reality can be helped out at certain points by constructs. To give an instance outside of metaphysics: we can understand certain things better when we deal with habit-groups in terms of matter and form, although the term "matter" is not used in its proper sense. In metaphysics itself, we deal with pure intelligibilities; this is especially true in the case of the predicaments. For example, *relation* as a form is a construct; in the real order there is no *form* of relation, as we have seen. But we can understand relational reality by means of such a mentally constructed form. The use of such constructs does not make the whole knowledge constructural, since the basic knowledge in metaphysics is ontological. We can therefore legitimately speak of "primary constructs" (when they are the basic concepts of a science) and "secondary constructs" (when the constructs appear in auxiliary positions).

In passing, we have referred to "second-level abstractions." Ordinarily, when we speak of abstraction, we indicate a direct but incomplete way of understanding a thing. For example, when we understand Peter as a "man," our concept *man* is abstract, inasmuch as it does not explicitly include Peter's individuality. However, we can also abstract the intelligible form of "man" itself. Here, we indicate a partial way of understanding what we had previously understood. This is an abstraction performed, not with regard to a thing, but with regard to what we know about a thing. Such an abstraction we have called a "second-level abstraction." For example, we abstract from Peter's individuality to

get the concept "man"; we abstract from the general subject included in "man" to get the concept "humanity." This kind of abstraction is in quite common use, and usually people are not confused by abstract terms of this kind. Sometimes, however, they are; the "state," for example, is a second-level abstraction that sometimes is mistaken for a reality as such. We have seen other instances of misunderstanding with regard to the predicaments, especially that of relation.

Another type of second-level abstraction that we have already referred to is the "concept of existence as a form." We know that the act of existing, although it is the basic and primary act, is definitely *not* a form. We can help ourselves to understand esse better by an analogy with form. But when we go further and think that esse is a form, then we have developed a full-blown construct. It is true that we can do certain things with the "form of existence"; for example, we can say that properly real things have the form of existence, whereas mental fictions do not possess such a form. Provided we know what we are doing, such a proceeding would not be harmful, although it might be somewhat useless. But if we think that this is indeed what esse really is, then we are making use of a primary construct and will most likely soon be in difficulties.

Similarly, in the course of our study of being, we have referred to various *concepts* of being. These concepts, inasmuch as they were supposed to be the primary and basic understanding of that-which-is, played the role of *primary* constructs. The philosophies based on them are therefore *constructural*, and in considering them, we have rejected them as inadequate.

But we can still raise a legitimate question: "Can there be a concept of being which would play the role of a *secondary* construct?" Why should we seek such a construct? One good reason might be that we seek a way of unifying our knowledge of being. We know, of course, that being is not strictly one but many: there are many beings, and these distinct beings do not constitute any one single being. We know, secondly, that there is no one act of

knowledge by which we can know all beings at once, and, consequently, all our direct knowledge of being is analogous, like the beings which we know. But is this plurality irreducible? Being, in the real order, can be reduced to one *cause*: the unity of the universe is established ultimately by this: that all other beings are caused by the *one* supreme being. Similarly, in the order of knowledge, the analogy of being has a unity in that we finally come to know all other beings as beings by participation, whereas there is only one being by essence. This is as far as direct knowledge can take us.

But if we reflect on all our knowledge of being, we can see a kind of pattern in the many acts of knowledge by which we know the beings that are analogically one. In every case, we understand a being as "that-which-is." By looking at all these acts of knowledges, we find this in general to be true: "Whenever we understand something as real, we understand it as something-which-is." We can now, by a second-level abstraction, express this statement in a concept which is a definition: being is that which is understood as something-which-is. Because this definition expresses what we do when we understand a being, it can also be called a "law" or a "rule." ** Because it is a second-level abstraction, the "rule of conception of being" is a construct, not a direct knowledge of any real being. Because it is not a primary but a derived concept and by no means is it the basic concept or judgment on which metaphysics is built, it is a secondary construct. As it stands, this "concept of being as a rule of understanding" is absolutely universal and can be used, if we wish, as a point of reference to give an external unification to our manifold direct knowledge of being.

Moreover, this structural concept of being has some direct

"Tins may sound Kantian to some, but there is a difference. The Kantian "rules" (categories) are constitutive of objects as they appear and so are primary constructs; the "rule of the conception of being" is derived from objects ontologically constituted by internal principles and already known directly as beings in the first sense of that term; hence, it is a secondary construct.

use as a predicate. It may be extremely significant to say, in some contexts, that "X is a being." For example, there are some who hold that the First Principle of reality, though eminently real in some sense, is nonbeing (Plotinus, Erigena). To say, in the context of an analysis or criticism of such a position, "God is a being," means "God can be truly understood by us as something which is." In some other contexts, to say, "This is a being" is equivalent to saying, "This is a fact" or "This is not a fiction."

108. The analogy of *analogy*

The Thomistic tradition almost always implies and often says explicitly that there is only one real analogy. Take the traditional interpretation that there are three kinds of analogy: according to intention alone; according to *esse* alone; according to both *esse* and intention. The first is extrinsic analogy or metaphor; the second is univocation (although the individuals as they exist are not one in being but only similar); the third is intrinsic analogy, and it is the only one with which metaphysics is concerned. This analogy, most Thomists hold, is in fact the analogy of proper proportionality. The texts where St. Thomas distinguishes different kinds of analogy are either ignored or explained away as concerned with merely material differences. We have not followed this tradition, both because our study of reality has revealed different types of analogy and because the texts of St. Thomas seem to say that there are quite different types.³⁰

The bases of division of analogy can be of at least two kinds. First, we can divide analogy on the basis of the relation between our predication and reality, and then we find extrinsic and intrinsic analogies. An extrinsic analogy is a pure multiplicity, which is *considered* by the mind in some unified way. An intrinsic analogy is one which is inherent in the very things themselves that are

³⁰ The published textual studies on St. Thomas's doctrine of analogy have proceeded from a systematic standpoint (usually that of Cajetan) and so have failed to present St. Thomas in himself.

known. An extrinsic analogy is *made* by the mind; an intrinsic analogy is to some extent found in the real order.

Secondly, analogy can be divided according to its form, that is, according to the kind or type of relation in the various analogates. Here the basic division is into two-term, single-relation types, and the four-term, proportion-of-proportions type. (The analogy called by St. Thomas the "many-to-one" analogy is simply a combination of several two-term analogies. For instance, the "many-to-one" analogy of health wherein medicine, food, climate, complexion, and so forth, are analogously healthy in relation to animal health is a complication of the analogy of medicine to animal health, food to animal health, and so on. Hence, it does not seem to need separate consideration.)

Two-term analogies are basically of two different kinds: proportion and participation. Analogies of proportion, in general, are all those analogies in which one of the analogates is more perfectly what the other is deficiently. The meaning of the phrase "more perfectly" will vary as the analogates vary. Tims, in the act-potency proportion, the act and potency are analogous, in that the act is what the potency can be, the act is "suited" to the potency, the potency to the act—for example, the conception "understanding" used of the power, the habit, the act (like the Latin *intellectus*); or "sight," used of the power, the act, and the object. Similar to, and based on, this analogy is the analogy according to which a possible can be said to be: for a possible can be said to be inasmuch as there is an essence capable of receiving an act of existing and a cause for that possible (which cause actually exists). Another kind of proportion is that between non-univocal causes and their effects. This proportion can be extrinsic if the cause is strictly equivocal; it is intrinsic if the cause is strictly analogous.⁴⁰ Thus, in the case of health, the food is an

⁴⁹The meaning of the pair of terms, "extrinsic" and "intrinsic," is somewhat different in the cases of the different kinds of proportion. Thus, in the proportion of act and potency (for example, *sight* as an act and as a

equivocal cause of animal health; it does not possess as an inherent perfection the special disposition which it helps to bring about. Yet an equivocal cause is truly a cause; it possesses some perfection which unhealthy food does not possess, and it is because of this perfection also that it is denominated healthy. Note that in this second case, the meaning of "proportion" is slightly different from that of the first type (potency-act proportion); here, it means "apt to produce, yet not the same and not less." A third kind of proportion is that between being and the principles of being, substance and the principles of substance, essence and the principles of essence. Thus, the whole concrete individual is that-which-is; inasmuch as essence, for example, is such a principle that in union with another principle a being is constituted, it can, in a secondary and proportional sense, be truly called a being. A fourth kind of proportion is that whereby a product of the mind is made similar to something real. Thus, a "being of reason" is made by the mind, and it is conceived after the manner of real being, although it is not such. Similarly, "predicamental being" is considered by the mind after the manner of real being, although what is known in this way is only a principle of being. These proportions are clearly extrinsic, and the relation between the two analogates is that the prior one is the model.

The second kind of two-term analogy is the analogy of participation. In this analogy, one analogate is by essence (or nature) what the other is by participation. In other words, one analogate is by identity what the other analogate has. The most fundamental instance of the analogy of participation is the analogy of being between God and creature, which, as we have seen, is not the first analogy; we discover between the two analogates but can be

power), the analogy is an intrinsic analogy, in the sense that the potency is by its own intrinsic nature a potency to this specific kind of act and no other. In causal analogy, an intrinsically analogous cause possesses in itself a higher perfection which is similar to the perfection of the effect: an extrinsically analogous, or equivocal, cause contains an equivalent but not a similar perfection.

known only when God is known to be a subsistent act of existing. In the analogy between God and creature, the analogate which is by essence what the other is by participation is also the total efficient cause of the other. The analogy obtains with regard to being, goodness, truth, beauty, life, intelligence, and the like. Another kind of analogy of participation can be found where one analogate is by its essence what another is by participation, without any causal relation between the two. For example, angels are intellectual by nature, men, by participation. Here, the analogy is real and intrinsic, but it is known in a very indirect way. An extrinsic analogy of participation⁴¹ is that whereby the predicamental accident shares in the being of predicamental substance.

The other basic type of analogy is the four-term type, the analogy of proportionality'. It is to be found first of all between finite individuals as beings. It is the first analogy we find in experience, and it supposes an independent knowledge of each of the analogates. Moreover, between two analogates of this analogy there is no intrinsic order as such. Another instance of proper proportionality' is the series of pairs of intrinsic constituents of finite being, considered as act and potency. (The traditional instance of proper proportionality between substance and accident we will designate as extrinsic, as made by the mind and not found in reality'; as we have seen, this analogy is thought to be real because of the confusion between predicamental and metaphysical accident.)

Schematically, we may consider the picture of analogy thus:

"An analogy of participation is intrinsic when the participant possesses the participated act as its own (as a creature really possesses its own act of existing). An analogy of participation is extrinsic when the participant does not possess the participated act as its own but refers to the act of that which is by essence—for example, "predicamental accident" extrinsically participates the being of "predicamental substance" (which is predicamental being by essence), in the sense that accident includes substance in its definition (for example, "color" is the quality of a material thing; "shape" is a quality of the surface of a material thing; and won).

¶ as on the basis of its relation to the real order: ?xtrjns^c
 lintrinsic

			act-potency
			actual-possible
			cause-effect
		proportion	components of being
			“ of essence
			“ of substance
(6) according to	two-term		model-modeled
its form:	single-		
	relationship		
		participation	and efficiency:
			God and creature
			being
			goodness
			truth
			beauty
			life, intelligence, and
			so forth
			without efficiency
			extrinsic, by modeling
		direct, among	individuals as beings
	four-term:	“act-potency correlation” of the princi-	
		ples of being	

109. Thomism and the Thomists

Repeatedly in the footnotes and in the course of this chapter, reference has been made to interpretations of St. Thomas which differ from the one presented here. The appeal has been primarily to experiential evidence; an introductory book is no place to conduct an historical and textual argument. It is to be hoped that the studies cited in this last chapter will supply to some extent this part of the total demonstration.¹²

To anyone who already has some knowledge of Thomism before he reads this book, the position will appear as more or less of a departure from what he has learned. “More or less”—for in

“ In addition to the studies cited above, in n. 4, 7, 8, 11, and 13, reference should be made particularly to Etienne Gilson, *Being and Some Philosophers*, 2d ed. (Toronto, Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1953); *Le Thomisme*, 5th ed. (Paris, Vrin, 1945); *Réalisme thomiste et critique de la connaissance* (Paris, Téqui, 1939).

fact there are many Thomisms. Some hold that there is a quidditative concept of being, a concept of the act of existing itself, that judgment is a composition of two concepts, that we have a conceptual knowledge of what God is, that the proper point of departure is the concept of being itself. Others, Thomists too, deny all this. On another point, that of analogy, there are also several positions: that there is only one type of analogy; that there are several types all combined at once in the analogy of being; that there are several irreducible types of analogy, even of the analogy of being. There are differences in the interpretation of the categories and of their relation to real being. There are some Thomists who admit constructural knowledge; others who do not. There are all sorts of positions on the relation of metaphysics to experience, to other parts of philosophy, to other disciplines.

In the presence of this historical situation, it seems legitimate to ask that this book not be judged on the basis of its agreement or disagreement with any commentator on St. Thomas, no matter how exalted the historical position of that commentator and no matter what his merits be in theology or history or in other branches of philosophy. Does the evidence appealed to square with experience? Is the understanding of that experience, and the conclusions drawn from it, in harmony with the actual philosophical understanding of St. Thomas *himself* as he has chosen to express it in the solution of the problems as they came to him in the context of his own time?

The concern for the authentic understanding of St. Thomas is not an authoritarian one. It is simply that St. Thomas's thought has a directness and a four-square fit with experiential evidence, a profundit}', and an all-encompassing power that seem to be unique among philosophers, Christian as well as non-Christian. If this book can bring forth in the student the ability and the desire to read St. Thomas directly, it will have fulfilled its immediate aim. St. Thomas himself will then be the guide that will lead him to a philosophical understanding of being and, in that, to a knowledge and love of God.

Index of Passages

From St. Thomas Aquinas

<i>Commentary on the Epistle to the Hebrews</i> , chap. 2, lect. 3 . . .	184-185
<i>Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans</i> , chap. 1» lcCt. 6 • •	183-184
<i>Commentary on Aristotle's Ethics</i> , Bk. I, lect. 7, No. 95 . . .	62-63
<i>Commentary on Aristotle's Metaphysics</i>	
Proemiuni.....	19-21
Bk. I, lect. 2, No. 47	22-23
lect. 10, No. 158	206-207
lect. 11, No. 179	209
Bk. III, lect. 12, No. 501	208
Bk. IV, lect. 1, Nos. 529-533	49-50
lect. 1, Nos. 534-536, 539	97-98
ket 1, No. 558	182
lect. 2, No. 560	209
Bk. V, lect. 2, Nos. 771, 773, 774-775	158-159
lect. 7, Nos. 843-844	209
lect. 8, No. 879	63
lect. 17, Nos. 1004-1005	254
lect. 20, No. 1063	255-256
Bk. VII, lect. 2, No. 1278	117-118
lect. 2, Nos. 1287-1289	226-227
lect. 4, Nos. 1352-1853	237-238
lect. 8, Nos. 1440, 1442c, 1412z, 1444-1446 . . .	141-142
Bk. VIII, lect. 1, Nos. 1683-1684	227
lect. 1, Nos. 168-S-16S9.....	97
Bk. IX, lect. 3, Nos. 1805-1806	117
lects. 7, 8, Nos. 18-16-1847, 1856, 1861 - - -	118
Bk. X, lect. 3, Nos. 1979-1980	227-228
lect. 3, No. 1982	224
Bk. XI, lect. 9, No. 2313	256
Bk. XU, lect. 1, Nos. 2-119-2420	206
lect. 2, Nos. 2429-2430	73-74
<i>Commentary on Aristotle's Physics</i> , Bk. III, lect. 5	225-226
<i>Commentary on Aristotle's Posterior Analytics</i> , Bk. II, lect. 41 . . .	181
Comme»tor[/ on Boethius's De Trinitate, q. 5, art. 3 . . .	50-51
<i>Commentary on the Books of the Sentences</i>	
Prologue, q. 1, art. 2.....	22
q. 1, art. 2, ad 2.....	142-143
Bk. I, dis. 2, q. 1, art. 1, arg. 4.....	99
dis. 2, q. I, art. 3	185, 208

dis. 3, q. 1, art. 2.....	51
dis. 8, q. 1, art. 1.....	100
dis. 8, q. 4, art. 2, ad 1.....	184
dis. 8, q. 5, art. 2.....	98-99
dis. 19, q. 5, art. 1.....	207
dis. 20, q. 1, art. 1.....	255
dis. 26, q. 2, art. 2, ad 2.....	254-255
dis. 37, q. 4, art. 3.....	74-75
Bk. II, dis. 1, q. 1, art. 1.....	99-100
dis. 3, q. 3, art. 2.....	21-22
dis. 3, q. 1, art. 3.....	181
Bk. III, dis. 6, q. 2, art. 2.....	237
dis. 27, q. 2, art. 4, qa. 2.....	22
Bk. IV, dis. 1, q. 1, art. 4, qa. 1.....	142
<i>Contra Gentiles</i> , Bk. III, chap. 9.....	224
<i>De Malo</i> , q. 1, art. 1.....	210-211
q. 1, art. 1, ad 19.....	224
<i>Quodlibet</i> II, art. 3.....	181-182, 224
III, art. 20.....	181
VII, art. I, ad I.....	183
IX, art. 3.....	238
<i>Summa Theologiae</i> , Pt. I, q. 9, art. 1.....	74
Pt. I, q. 48, art. 2, ad 2.....	224
Pt. I, q. 88, art. 2 and ad 2.....	52
Pt. III, q. 2, art. 7, ad 2.....	255
<i>On the Power of God</i> , q. 7, art. 10, ad 8.....	256
<i>Truth</i> , q. 2, art. 11.....	83
<i>On the Virtues in General</i> , art. 11.....	238

Index of Names and Subjects

Italicized numbers indicate definitions

- Absolute nature, 54
- Abstraction, 37-38, 39-40, 41-42, 47, 50-51, 52, 262, 276; formal, 37-38, 47, 230; second-level, 38, 191, 249, 284, 285; three degrees of, 39; total, 37, 47, 214, 215
- Accident, 78, 79, 93, 95, 98, 101, 107, 121, 122, 206, 213, 223, 229, 236, 237-238, 241; formal, 122; predicamental, 230, 233, 241; proper, 82
- Act, 70, 102, 107, 109, 117, 122, 131, 133, 168, 198; first and second, 113, 124 (*see also* Existing, act of); pure, 171, 180; *see also* Being in act
- Act-potency correlation, 153, 245
- Acting, 122-123, 138, 171; immanent, 125
- Action, 125, 138, 145, 147, 244, 247-248, 253, 256; immanent, 92, 152, 153-154, 158, 250; transient, 138, 154, 158
- Activity, 92, 105, 148, 260; aimless, 152; conscious, 144-145; natural, 147-150; transient, 92
- Actualism, 26-27, 65
- Adler, Mortimer J., 272
- Agent, 119-120, 121, 125, 131, 138, 141, 146, 151, 248; *see also* Cause, efficient
- Agnosticism, 162, 174
- Albertson, James S., 236
- Analogous, 61
- Analogue (analogate), 61
- Analogy', 63, 78-79, 198, 286-290; causal (*see below* Analogy of eminence); extrinsic, 136, 137; extrinsic and intrinsic, 289; intrinsic, 136, 137; of being, 57; of eminence, 135-137, 140, 143, 165, 170, 173; of participation, 170-174, 180, 181-182; of proportion, 63, 79, 83, 93, 98, 107, 114, 137, 142, 173, 190, 192, 213, 215; of proportionality, 58, 61, 62, 63, 79, 137, 172-173; of substance, 83
- Analysis (philosophical), 162
- Analytic principle: *see* Principle, per se known
- Angels, 172
- Anselm, St., 166
- Apprehension, 40, 47, 50, 214
- Aquinas, St. Thomas, 13, 19, 48, 57, 60, 62, 82, 96, 105, 117, 128, 140, 158, 163, 164, 171, 180, 198, 205, 223, 237, 247, 253, 257, 258, 265, 268, 275, 286, 290-291; *see also* Index of Translated Passages from St. Thomas Aquinas
- Aristotle, 13, 15, 19, 73, 94, 140, 247, 265
- Atheism, 161
- Attribution, 232
- Augustine, St., 206
- Avempacé, 52
- Averroës, 26, 32
- Averroism, 32-33
- Avicenna, 26, 100, 278
- Beautiful, 203-204
- Becoming, 69, 72, 124; *see also* Change
- Being, 35, 41, 47, 48, 49, 54-56, 61-62, 65, 73, 89, 99-100, 101, 107, 110, 172, 186, 187, 202, 206, 212, 219, 222, 231, 237; analogy of, 143 (*see also* Analogy); as being, 44,

- 47, 48, 266; community of, 56; concept of, 57, 188, 284; in act, 70, 72, 102, 133; in common, 21; in potency, 70, 72, 102, 133; meanings of, 224; metaphysical knowledge of, 41-44; of reason, 190-192, 204, 206, 243; predicamental, 214, 216, 222, 224, 231, 232-233, 237, 238, 277; primitive notion of, 39-41; sensible, 266; unity of, 187
- Boyle, Robert R., 60
- Brute, 146
- Cajetan, 41, 57, 286
- Caldin, E. F. 19, 180
- Category. *See* Predicament
- Causality, 121, 123, 125, 134, 138, 170; theorem of, 130-131
- Cause, 120, 138, 158-159, 245; analogous, 128, 136-137, 139, 165, 170, 173; efficient, 121, 138, 147, 159 (*see also* Agent); equivocal, 128, 136-137, 110, 142, 165; exemplar, 130, 139; final, 146, 157 (*see also* End, Coal, Finality); first, 127, 139, 164, 166; formal, 121, 138, 159; instrumental, 128-129, 139, 142, 165; material, 121, 138, 159; of becoming, 127; of being, 127; principal, 128-129, 139, 142, 165; secondary, 127, 129-130, 139, 160; univocal, 127-128, 135, 139, 142, 163-164
- Certitude, 14, 22, 23
- Chance, 154, 157, 177, 180; and finality, 157; kinds of, 156
- Change, 64-65, 68-71, 72, 73-74, 97, 102, 119-120, 124, 144, 167, 219 (*see also* Becoming); accidental, 76-78, 95; substantial, 80-83, 95
- Christ, 236
- Christian culture, 279
- Collins, James, 26
- Coming-to-be. *See* Change
- Common sense, 1, 269-273
- Compénétration, 85
- Composition, 73, 86, 90, 99
- Comte, Auguste, 26
- Concept, 37, 40, 88; *see also* Being, concept of
- Condition, active, 119, 137; passive, 119, 137
- Construct, 192, 248-249, 283-284 (*see also* Knowledge, construc-tural); primary and secondary, 283-284
- Contingence, 132-133, 134, 139, 151, 169, 174, 179
- Contrary, 74
- Cosmogony, 164
- Cosmology. *See* Philosophy of nature
- Creation, 174, 176, 201
- Defective, 147
- Definition, 17, 237-238
- De Lubac, Henri, 161
- Demonstration, 165, 179
- Demonstrative knowledge. *See* Knowledge, scientific
- Denomination, 218, 225, 230, 256; extrinsic, 201, 248, 251, 253
- Determination, 183
- Determinism, 179
- Dialectical materialism. *See* Mate-rialism, dialectical
- Difference, 67-68
- Dimension, 85-86
- Dionysius, 183
- Disposition, 119, 137
- Distinction, 66-67, 72; of reason, 67, 72; real, 66-67, 72
- Diversity, 281
- Doubt, universal (methodic), 267
- Effect, 120, 138, 244
- Eminence, 183; *see also* Analogy of eminence
- Empiricism, 65
- Empiricists, 5
- End, 145, 152, 157, 158-159; *see also* Goal, Purpose
- Entlechy, 117
- Epistemology, 8
- Equivocal, 53, 59, 61, 62
- Erigena, 286
- Esse, 123, 182, 213, 216, 232, 237; accidental, 231, 232, 233; of re-lation, 243, 255; substantial, 216, 232; *see also* Existing, act of
- Essence, 39, 65, 89, 90, 93, 98-99, 101, 107, 123, 189, 214, 237-238

- Essentialism 30-33, 47, 65
 Eucharist, 236
 Evil, 161, 175-176, 199-200, 205, 210-211, 224
 Evolution, 156-157
 Existence, 193, 284
 Existing, act of, 40, 44, 56, 65, 89, 90, 92, 95, 96, 99-100, 101, 106, 107, 109, 122, 151, 160, 175, 198, 233, 238; *see also* *Esse*
 Experience, 266
 Extrinsic denomination, 250

 Faith, 10-11, 12, 278, 280
 False, 199
 Feibleman, James K., 5
 Fiction, 189, 191
 Fideism, 162
 Finality, 147, 157, 177; *see also* Cause, final; End; Goal
 Finalization, 146, 147, 152-153, 157, 244, 245
 Form, 97, 101, 107, 130, 150, 198, 213 (*see also* Cause, formal); substantial, 121, 122
 Formalization, 212
 Foundation of relation, 240, 254; kinds, 247
 Freedom, 171

 Generation, 141
 Genus, 186
 Gilson, Etienne, 13, 19, 26, 48, 62, 96, 158, 180, 186, 223, 290
 Goal, 144, 157 (*see also* Cause, final; End; Finality); -directedness, 147-148
 God, 21, 90, 99-100, 127, 132, 143, 154, 156, 160, 169, 170, 198, 201, 203, 208, 222, 231, 236, 245, 259, 266-267, 269, 286, 288, 289; knowledge of, 181, 183-184, 185
 Good, 199, 205, 209; proper (unqualified), 199-200; transcendental, 200
 "Great books," 275

 Habitus, 251, 253
 Harmon, Francis L., 140, 221
 Hawkins, D. J. B., 19
 Hegel, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich, 57
 Henle, Robert J., 48, 261
 Heraclitus, 64, 70, 71
 Hobbes, Thomas, 26
 Humanism, 162
 Hume, David, 26
 Hypostasis, 223

 Identity, 66, 72
 Immanent acting. *See* Action
 Immaterial, 43; knowledge of, 52
 Implication, 41, 47
 Indefinite reference, 55
 Indetermination, 109
 Individual, 55, 56, 61, 83-84, 95, 221
 Individuality, 86, 94
 Individuation, 86, 94, 108
 Induction, 261; rational, 262
 Influence, 130
 Inhere, 232
 Insight, 261
 Instrument. *See* Cause, instrumental
 Integral part, 9, 71
 Intelligibility, 47, 185, 190, 204, 207, 212, 234, 241, 258; of relation, 243; potential, 258
 Intention, first, 217, 241; second, 217, 241
 Interference of causes, 155-156, 178

 Jesus Christ, 222, 274
 Johann, Robert O., 141
 Judgment, 40, 47, 50, 88; of implication (*see* Implication); of separation (*see* Separation); perceptual, 40

 Kane, William H., 260
 Kant, Immanuel, 26, 89, 285
 Klubertanz, George P., 13, 36, 39, 41, 91, 156, 180, 193, 214, 258, 261, 262, 264, 266
 Knowledge, common, 53-54, 62; constructural, 261-264; dianoetic, 259; empiriological, 259; humanistic, 2-3, 273-276; intuitive, 259; kinds of, 257-258; manner of, 258; modes of, 1-7; ontological, 259-261; perionetic, 259; scientific, 3-5, 14-15, 17, 36-37, 53, 276-

- 278; spontaneous, 1-2, 7, 36, 163,
265-267; subject of, 4
Kossell, Clifford G., 206, 237, 253
- Lauer, J. Quentin, 96
Leibniz, Baron von, 26, 167
Life, 203
Limitation, 133-134, 183
Living thing, 133
Logic, 8, 39
- Many, 195
Maritain, Jacques, 19, 48, 73, 96,
117, 161, 180, 206, 258, 259
Marxism 29, 162
Materialism, 26, 27-28, 47, 161-162;
dialectical, 29; modern, 29
Mathematics, 261, 262
Matter, 29, 37, 97, 101, 107, 213,
235; first (*see below* Matter, pri-
mary); intelligible, 88; primary,
81, 85, 94, 95, 122; *see also*
Cause, material
Maurer, Armand, 96
Mechanism, 161
Metaphor, 60, 191
Metaphysics, 17, 19-21, 22, 23, 26,
49-50, 51, 160, 189, 264-265, 275-
276, 278; *see also* Philosophy of
being
Michotte, Albert, 140
Miracle, 219
Mode, of knowledge. *See* Knowledge
Motion, 72, 117, 124
Multiplicity, 90, 99
Mysticism, 163
- Nature, 93; knowledge of, 260
Necessity, 131-132, 139, 174; kinds
of, 131-132
Negation, 191
Neo-Kantianism, 163
Nominalism, 124
Northrop, F. S. C., 259
- Object, 4; formal, 258; of knowledge,
20-21; of knowledge (formal), 5,
17; of knowledge (material),
5, 17; of knowledge (proper), 5,
17; *see also* Knowledge, object of
- Occasion, 120, 138
One, 193-195, 204, 208; kinds of,
194
Operational, 263
Order, potency and act, 115
Organized knowledge. *See* Knowl-
edge, scientific
Owens, Joseph, 131, 258, 266
- Pantheism, 162
Parmenides, 64, 70, 71, 283
Part, 71
Participation, 172, 196, 201, 231-
232; *see also* Analogy of participa-
tion
Passage from potency to act, 131,
133, 168
Passion, 124, 138, 244, 248, 253, 256
Patient, 120, 121, 138, 141, 249
Perception, 266; *see also* Judgment,
perceptual
Per se known principles. *See* Prin-
ciple, per se known
Person, 221, 223
Personality, 222, 223
Phelan, Gerald B., 62
Phenomenalism, 26
Phenomenological, 261
Phenomenology, 261
Philosophy, 9, 12, 18; constructura!,
282-286; history of, 282; impor-
tance of, 6; of being, 5, 6; of be-
ing (*see* Metaphysics); of nature,
8, 90, 260, 276-277
Pius XII, 180
Plato, 206, 282
Platonism, 30-31, 52
Plotinus, 286
Plurality, 285
Position (philosophical), 268
Positivism, 162, 174
Positivists, 5
Possibility, 104
Possible, 188-190, 204
Potency, 70, 102, 103, 122, 123,
131, 133, 152, 168-169 (*see also*
Being in potency); passive, 124
Potency-act correlation, 153, 213,
245
Power, 91, 106, 109, 123, 126, 152;
active, 113

- Pragmatism, 162-163
 Predetermination, 157
 Predicable, 217, 223
 Predicament, 212, 222, 224-226;
 division of, 217-218; *see also*
 Being, predicamental
 Presupposition, 266
 Principle, 18, 72, 78, 79, 82, 89, 91,
 107, 121, 149, 213; of causality,
 130; of contradiction, 45; of in-
 telligibility, 197; of knowledge, 18,
 267; of knowledge (first), 44-46;
 per se known, 46, 51, 133
 Priority, 89, 117-118
 Privation, 74, 98, 191, 200, 206, 210,
 224
 Proof, 165-168, 179; kinds of, 166
 Proportionality, analogy of. *See*
 Analogy
 Proportionality, univocal, 60
 Purpose, 145, 152, 157

 Quality, 108, 235-236, 236, 247
 Quantity, 86, 234-235, 236
 Quiddity, 39, 91, 99, 189

 Ratio. *See* Intelligibility
 Real, 24-25, 34-35, 42, 46, 47-48, 64,
 188
 Realism, 84
 Reality, 44
 Reduction, 161
 Régis, Louis-M., 272
 Relation, 126, 239, 244-247, 252;
 kinds, 246-247; of reason, 191,
 252,- predicamental, 239, 242-243,
 252; predicamental (of reason),
 240; predicamental (real), 240;
 real, 252, 253; transcendental, 239,
 252
 Religion, 10
 Result, 148
 Revelation, 278
 Russell, Bertrand, 134

 Salmon, Elizabeth G., 266
 Sartre, Jean Paul, 57
 Science, 3, 17, 29, 192, 276-278
 Scotism, 26, 31-32
 Self-evident, 133; *see also* Principle,
 per se known

 Semantics, 162
 Sentimentalism, 162
 Separability, 66
 Separated soul, 87
 Separated substance, 88
 Separation, 42-43, 47, 48, 50-51, 52;
 from matter, 21; judgment of, 89
 Series, 169, 179
 Sertillanges, A. D., 117, 158, 181
 Sheldon, Wilmon H., 49
 Simon, Yves, 271
 Simple, 194, 204
 Situs, 251, 253
 Smith, Gerard, 49
 Something, 35, 188, 204
 Space, 250
 Species, 67
 Spinoza, Baruch, 26
 Spiritual, 176, 219-220, 251, 258
 Statistical law, 157
 Subject, of knowledge, 258; of re-
 lation, 240, 255-256
 Subsistent, 221
 Substance, 37, 77, 79, 83, 93, 95,
 97-98, 101, 107, 121, 122, 184,
 186, 206, 212, 213, 214, 223, 225,
 227-228, 229, 235, 237-238, 247;
 first, 220, 223; predicamental, 215,
 218-219, 231; second, 215, 220,
 223
 Substantial form, 81, 85, 94; *see*
 also Form; Cause; Formal
 Succession, 74
 Supposit, 220-221, 223
 Surrogate, 263

 Tendency, 92, 116, 124, 148, 151,
 152, 200, 202, 245, 246
 Term of relation, 240
 Testimony, 165
 That-which-is, 94, 96, 107; *see also*
 Essence
 Theism, 161
 Theology, 12, 21, 278, 279; natural,
 8-9, 160
 Theorem of act and potency, 103-
 112
 Theorem of causality. *See* Causality
 Thing, 18, 188, 204; material, 18;
 principle, 213 (*see also* Essence);
 sensible, 18

- Thomism, 232, 265, 270, 281-282, 286, 290-291
 Thomistic philosophy, 15-16, 34-35
 Time, 207, 251
 Transcendental, 172, 186, 204
 Transient action. *See* Action
 True, 195
 Truth, 205; kinds of, 195

 Understanding, 259
 Unique, 194
 Universal, 38, 54, 62, 84, 108, 215; formal (reflex), 54
 Universal (simple, direct). *See* Absolute nature
 Universality, 14, 23
 Univocal, 47, 53-54, 59, 61, 62, 174-175, 187, 262
 Univocation. *See* Univocal
 Van Rict, Georges, 271
 Van Roo, William A., 96, 117
 Verification, 264
 Violence, 116
 Virtual. 113
 Virtually, 40

 Walton, William M., 96
 When, 250-251, 253
 Where, 250, 253
 Whole, 194, 205
 Wild, John, 19, 49, 73, 117, 141, 26)
 Wisdom, 20, 280

 Ziegelmeier, Edmund H., 269

